Volume 1 – Day of the Unicorn, pt.1

Prologue[edit]

0001[edit]

(20:00 GMT has passed. How is everyone spending this memorable New Year's Eve? For tonight marks the end of an old age, and the beginning of a new. The era named after the most famous person in history, the Age of Christ, will end in four hours.

Ever since humans stumbled out of the dark ages and stood on their own two feet, they have learned how to cross vast oceans and fly in in the limitless sky, and have obtained the technology to explore the final frontier: outer space. Now, humans will enter an age where we leave mother Earth, as the door to the new world is opened in front of us all!

Just as our ancestors ventured to new continents in search of opportunity and freedom, and lit the fire of civilization across the Earth, we too bear the responsibility of kindling the flame of civilization in our new continent: space. From now on, those flying into space are not just astronauts and technicians. They are trailblazers who will remain in space and light the fire of civilization in space. They are Spacenoids, chosen residents of outer space.

This new age needs a new calendar. Four hours from now, at 00:00 GMT, the Earth Federation government will begin the ceremony of an age change. The stage for the momentous ceremony that will be forever marked in history is the Prime Minister's residence, 'Laplace.' A place that will act as the bridge to outer space - set on an orbiting plane around the Earth, no other location could be more appropriate for the declaration of the space age.

Under the eager and watchful eyes of the media, the United Nations representatives have gathered at 'Laplace.' Everyone in the world is waiting for midnight to arrive, on New Year's Eve, the eve of a new age. Everyone has different feelings, from those anxious and full of expectations, to those still clinging to the old age that has lasted more than two thousand years. Regardless, everyone is a witness to this historic moment. In the long and tumultuous history of humanity, only we, who are alive right now, will be privileged with witnessing the beginning of a new age. So why don't we enjoy this moment, and be thankful as we say goodbye to the old age? Let us smile and accept the arrival of the new age!

Goodbye, Anno Domini.

Hello, Universal Century--!)

The Earth was right below them. The reddish-brown land contrasted with the sea that looked like blue sky covered with clouds.

Looking down from 200 kilometers above, it was more like a landscape than a planet. It didn't look as though there were an atmosphere below, but more like the view from a plane in the high skies looking down on the earth. As one continued to look, one might even gain the false impression that one could land.

"Even so, the sight of the ever-changing landscape causes me to understand that I'm moving through the upper atmosphere at an unimaginable speed — one orbit every 90 minutes. When I look forward, I can see the profile of the planet covering the atmosphere, forming a gradual gradient. Looking around, I see that there's only the strong and overpowering light of Earth taking away the shine of the stars around, and everything around is a vacuum. It's not enough to call it pitch-darkness, but rather, an endless darkness that sucks away all the light."

"It seems that I'm in outer space." Suddenly realizing this, Syam felt a chill on his back. Even though he was already tired of looking through the little window in the worker ship, it was completely different to be wearing only a spacesuit, working outside the ship and looking through the helmet visor. As there wasn't anything to block his sight, he could comprehend all the more that his body was floating outside the earth.

Being separated from Earth's gravity, and the sensation of floating continuously outside the earth… it was extremely terrifying. He could feel his blood, bones, cells becoming hot because of this abnormal change that had never occurred before. The sweat that formed became icy-cold chills, and the throat that was exposed in zero gravity let out a terrified sound.

Syam looked at the emptiness in front of him. Amidst the darkness that erased all the stars, there was one lump of star letting out a sharp glow. It was the sun, letting out white light as if it were about to explode — no, its core was actually exploding continuously, and the radiation heat in space was reaching 120 degrees Celsius and scorching the surface of his spacesuit. It was completely different from looking at the sun from beneath the atmosphere. Up here, the sun would only be an energy source that gave off harsh white light, an object that sends fear into humans. Even with the visor and light filter reducing the luminosity, that sharp and powerful light didn't look as if it were reduced.

"I'll go crazy if I stay in such a place. This isn't a place humans should come to," Syam thought. In the distant past, those eager astronauts,

who now in hindsight could be said to have been reckless, flew out of the atmosphere and were each moved by the blue color of the Earth, a precious experience that had the power to override their values. However, they were the elites, specially chosen, and given the highest level of education. They were the most privileged in human society; different from those who had problems reading and writing. Even if someone like him entered outer space, there wouldn't be any benefits for him. Basically, for a 17 year old who didn't know the names of the continents or their locations, or where his hometown was, the Earth below his feet was merely a large slab that was ridiculously big.

Frontiers? What kind of joke was that? This is a garbage field. A place to dump humans who are multiplying rapidly; a rubbish dump without borders.

(What kind of world will this outer space be, this place where humans will live? As the Universal Century is about to begin, let's review this for everyone once again. Today, our special guest is the top scholar in astronomy, Alexis Gretsky…)

The voice of the audio broadcaster continued to echo emptily as it mixed with his breathing, moving through the thick spacesuit with no way out. Syam touched the materials of the structure with the soles of his feet.

As he checked the safety tension of the chain, he moved the soles of his feet to flip the material onto its other side. Though he spun 180 degrees around and upside down, it meant nothing in space, where there was no concept of up and down. Syam used his hand in its thick glove to grab the material of the lattice-shaped structure, and looked at its front side. There was a mirror right in front of him, about 3m wide in a rectangular concave shape, forming a dazzling reflective surface.

Thousands of these concave mirrors formed a flat circular disk, 500m in diameter, that had been in low Earth orbit for quite a few years. In the center there was a round hole about 100m wide, and beyond the hole was an empty darkness, making the disk look like one of those optical recording discs used in the past. Syam used the magnetism in his soles to let his feet land on the edge of the disk as he looked up. The donut-shaped structure that appeared in his eyes was about the same size as this mirror field, and through the center of the hole, he could see a round-shaped body, the same shape as this mirror, with the Earth floating in the background.

The two large disks that used the concave surface to reflect the sunlight and were shining brightly had a donut ring in the middle, 300m away from them. That was the Low Earth Orbital Station ‘Laplace’. The two layers, one on top and one below, reflected the sunlight, providing light and energy to what is accurately called a Stanford ring. The residential area continued to rotate once every 75 seconds, creating gravity inside from the centrifugal force. Though this would only create gravity that was 1/6 of Earth's, about the equivalent to that of the moon, it would be much better than zero gravity. It’s said that for a 500m in diameter ring, one rotation in less than 30 seconds would be required to create the same amount of gravity as the Earth had, and it would cause the people inside to feel nauseous.

"Those high-ranking government officials were either too curious or idiots to use such a place as the Prime Minister’s Residence, and I’m even more of an idiot to sneak around beside the station and climb around getting sick." Syam tightened his face and grimaced. At this moment, his partner’s voice came from the wireless communicator (Oi, ‘Shepherd’, don’t move away from your position too much!)

“My job’s done.”

“Then get back onto the ship. Your lifesigns are messed up!”

His partner, a man who was viewed as the captain because of his seniority in age and whose authority was just second to the ‘worker head’, said. There wouldn’t be any sense of distance caused by air in vacuum, so he could see the shape of the object. The double layered ring structure that was divided into the outside and inside structure, the central spoke elevator that extend out from the central rotary axis, the joints of the structure and the texture; everything was so detailed that it was like a miniature model right in front of him.

Syam watched the outside ring that had glass stuck all over its interior to absorb light. As of the Greenwich Meridian Time, it should be night time, thus the light that’s reflected off the mirror wasn’t shone into the residential area. However, the interior lights came out from the glass panels, letting any observers know that someone was resting inside.

Over there, the final preparations for the changing of calendars ceremony 4 hours later were under way. From 23:45 on, the Prime Minister would give his speech, all the national representatives of the countries in the United Nations who were attending would be received, and adjustments for midnight for the ceremony would be done…facing what would be the biggest activity in human history, perhaps the officials should be extremely busy. Syam and the rest were called here to prepare this. The content of the work was to make a small correction to the mirror control program that was to be used for the ceremony.

However, this wasn’t an easy procedure that could be done from the controls at the control room. It was necessary to link directly to the hundreds of independent control panels inside the mirrors and install the correction angle program. This could be said to manual labor. It's said that nobody considered just using a single large mirror instead of an array of mirrors, and merely change the angle of the mirror at will. "I don’t know about the angle of the mirror, and I don’t have to know. We’re just the limbs, and other people are in charge of being the brain." Syam thought. The person who gave Syam and the others membership cards from the Motor company and sent them to ‘Laplace’; the person who said that a reward would be provided to them once the job was done; the person who was pretending that nothing happened as he waited for ‘that’ moment, and that it was unlikely for them to meet him.

"Lifesigns are messed up? What nonsense." Syam cursed in his heart. In this moment, nobody could remain calm. That’s because his gang’s actions would bring about a decisive change to hundreds of people’s

fates as they watched the ring…

(The concept of space migration existed in the 20th Century. It was raised by the physicist G.K O'Neill. His point was revised was because he wanted to let outer space be a place suitable for humans to live in. Earlier, the thoughts of migration to outer space was to either modify Venus or Mars into environments similar to Earth's, ideas that could only happen in a Sci-Fi world. Because of this, O'Neill's idea of using 'islands' in the migration of humans, including building on the moon or in the asteroid belt, had a chance of happening using the technology of that time. The basis of the space migration plan of today can be said to be completed by O'Neill.)

Syam didn't know which scholar was talking again as he pulled on his safety cable and let his body fly to the back of the mirror area.

(The idea itself was rather simple. Let a ball or round construct rotate regularly inside, causing the internal structure to create 1 G, the same amount of gravity as on Earth. If you hold a bucket full of water and swing it about hard, the water inside wouldn't fall out due to centrifugal force, correct? It's the same principal. The first ball-shaped object is commonly called 'Island 1', and it could just barely manage to create 1 G, but the latest, 'Island 3', is a giant: 32 kilometers long and 6.4 kilometers in diameter. This large cylinder has forests, rivers, streets, and habitats similar to Earth inside the walls; and the space residents are now living there.)

Like many mirrors, the back of the mirrors were just simple boards. The numerous supporting structures were intertwined with each other in a lattice structure. As Syam returned to the back, several of his colleagues were using handheld terminals and inputting the new program into the control panel.

In the darkness that was completely different from the mirror surface, flashing red warning lights were the only illumination, dimly lighting the area and showing the spacesuits of about 5 of Syam's colleagues. The cables of their spacesuits were all linked to a worker ship that was floating silently above them. The ship was jar-shaped, long, and narrow: 20m long and 30m in diameter, with the thrusters and a solar battery on the rear. Behind it, numerous green and white spaceship lights were roaming.

Those lights belonged to the Federation Spaceship, the Salamis-class security vessel. 70m in length with an uneven surface. The command area was protruding from the frame in front, and there were four jet thrusters on the back. The ship itself had a solar panel that was as large as the ship itself. For a security ship, it really reminded one of a

fishbone, and looked really unreliable. But as Syam had been told beforehand, the ship had high-energy laser cannons, and an unmatched combat ability

The Salamis class had lots of modes. There were all sorts of things, from the gatling guns that were built into the center of the ship, to the mounted railgun that was as long as the ship itself. However, the common point between all of them were their controlled satellite radar cannons. The small unmanned cannons had batteries, solar panels and laser-firing guns, and each vessel had 24 of these cannons. When necessary, the cannons could be scattered around the ship to create an iron wall-like defensive zone. Right now, it was under special security mode, and any suspicious craft that approached ‘Laplace’ even if it was cosmic dust in orbit would be destroyed the moment the radar detected it.

According to the information from before, there were 36 Salamis-class vessels, which, in other words, meant that there were 864 satellite lasers. However, it is expected that there would be such a large number, given that the space station need to defended in all 3 dimensions. ‘Laplace’, which had the Prime Minister and the representatives of the United Nations on it, would be the one place that required the most security in the Earth’s atmosphere. This time, the security was due to a threat letter the space Federation army recieved. In fact, Syam felt that no matter how devious the terrorists were, they couldn’t possibly attack from outside.

That’s right, if it was outside—

(Of course, the migrants in outer space would have night. The residential area of ‘Island 3’ has a mirror to absorb sunlight that is as long as the colony itself. As this diagram shows, the inside of the cylinder is divided into six areas. Three areas are lighting windows, and the light that enters here will shine on the other three areas. The windows are made from extremely thick glass that can block any harmful ultraviolet rays or galactic radiation. Right now, there are three residential satellites of ‘Island 3’ built, and there are technicians and settlers bringing their families to live here. But right now, there still aren't any reports of a residential satellite causing an epidemic of settlment. Once we adjust the light, we can recreate the 4 seasons. And we can even make artificial clouds for rainy days. In terms of complete management, this would be even more suited to live in than Earth.)

(Go live there yourself then!)

As the scholar said that, a colleague’s voice came through the wireless

communicator. Everyone was using the cable to keep in touch as they listened to the special program before the change of the calendar. Another colleague said, (He'll go! He'll keep his own colony on Earth and use it as a villa.)

(Outer space is truly large. However, we know that not every place is suited to build a migrant colony. The space migrant colony requires a construction in a gravity "safe zone" called a Lagrange Point. These are points that where the pull of gravity from the Earth and the moon is equal. There are 5 around the moon's orbit. We call these points L1 through L5. The 'Island 3' space colony that I just mentioned is located at the most stable of these points, L5, forming a settlement called Side 1. Right now, there are 10 million people living there, but once migration starts next year, the human population should vastly increase. The residential colonies should be constructed, and it's expected that there would be 70 or 80 space colonies forming a side that operates as its own government.)

(Assuming that a space colony can take 10 million people, once one side's population reaches 700 or 800 million, how many sides would the space migration plan need to build?)

(Right now, the plan is to continue to Side 6, but just that would require upwards of 50 years to complete. The expected capacity of all the colonies is around 5 billion people. With the projected population increase over the next 50 years, the estimate is that half of the population will become space migrants.)

Someone whistled and said (Hey, there's one for every two!), and then someone else said (Then you're the one being eliminated!)

(Basically, no one will dare reduce the human population, so once the Earth is full they'll just dump the excess people into outer space. Those people like us who got the 'eliminated life' stick."

Then, they were interrupted by the worker head (Stop yapping!), and there was only the voices of the audio broadcaster and the scholar. As he stared at the Salamis class vessel that looked really overwhelming, Syam muttered, "Being eliminated…"

Under the calls of 'Save the Earth, Save the Rest', the 50-year plan for humanity to migrate to outer space started. Most of these separatists, anti-government organizations or underground people believed that it was a grand scheme to abandon people in space. But no matter whether it was real or not, it was a fact that people like Syam were 'eliminated' and dumped into outer space first. In fact, though there were lots of enterprises that wanted to head into outer space, they

were all only attracted by the premium offers, and most of the first residents in outer space were all wanderers—low income people, as the association mentioned.

However, these weren't the problems. Most of the administration of the 'organization' were brazenly calling for people to separate from the Federation government, hailing national spirit and social rights. But these were just useless talk to Syam and the rest. If the Federation government could assure that they could work like this, they would definitely choose to support it, even if they had to head to the space colony 'Island 3' that looked like a huge high-pressure metal bottle. The problem was that they never had a choice in the beginning. The Federation's administration caused countries to be divided as they lost their jobs and hopes. The only option they could choose was to join the 'organization', which was the biggest problem.

Syam had been born in a poor small country in the Middle East. In his memories, the Earth Federation government was already established, and the surface of the moon was already known as a mining extraction site called Von Braun. But none of that had anything to do with Syam's family, as they were always in the highlands, being shepherds. It didn't matter to them whether the projection device on the moon surface mining site was finished or that the resource investigation group went to a planet far away to bring some test results back. It was just another world's news to Syam and the rest. The most he would hear was the adults complaining that the taxes were heavy and that the government would only remember them when it was time to collect.

And to these voices of discontent, the Federation government merely said that 'the Earth is already so tired'. Similar to what people in the past called the 'green revolution', the government declared that the increase in Earth's population caused damage to the environment, and the pollution from these people was another problem. Finally, if something like a limited nuclear war happened, it would be obvious that it was just a matter of time before Earth reached its limit, and the Earth Federation created lots of enterprises to save the world from this extreme situation. Then, the Federation government started to push for space migration, and declared that this was the one and only plan. Meanwhile, the Federation government used overwhelming military power to suppress any scattered seeds of discord and opposition on the tired Earth.

Though in the past, the Federation had divided great countries in order to to ensure that there wasn't much difference in the military and economic affairs of each, the people in charge were still the politicians of the old powerhouses. This point made many countries try to leave

the Federation, and Syam's own country was one of them. The country allied with the other Middle Eastern countries as crude oil was depleted, and what they got was divided in half. The land was divided in half under the punishment for rebellion, and the law was rewritten. The old customs of their ancestors were broken, Everyone was required to learn English, and the school curriculum changed.

Amidst this, Syam's father joined the guerilla forces and was soon arrested and sent to prison. Syam really couldn't imagine how that silent man whose only good point was his righteousness would be so passionate. But his father died in prison before he could even answer his doubts. Syam was left with his mother and his younger sister, and had to give up on his education to continue his family tradition of shepherding. That's how he got the nickname 'Shepherd'.

However, that job didn't last long either. As the migration to the space colonies entered its final stages, the Federation required a large number of launch sites, and the highlands where Syam and his people were staying at became one. Once the negotiations with the landowners and the resettlement of the people was complete, Syam's family was given a small compensation and chased away. Syam could only let his mother and little sister stay in the apartment in the city where the air quality was bad and go to work at the launch site. That was Syam's new life. And 3 years later, once the 6th launch site was completed, the person in charge of manpower told him that he didn't have any work left, and that they found that his father was a guerilla and they were ordered to fire him.

This reasoning was too far-fetched. After that, Syam heard that the Federation government's industrial strategy was to let lots of foreigners enter and send off those who had relations to guerillas. This could be said to be eliminating the guerillas and warning the rest of the people, a rather effective strategy. Syam was too lazy to even waste energy getting angry, and he needed money. His mother wasn't used to living in the city, and was often sick; and money was needed to see a doctor. His sister was reaching puberty, and he needed money to buy unpatched clothing for her; he had to work for bread tomorrow, for soup today.

He started going to an employment agency, going in and out of odd jobs. And this sort of place had brokers from violent organizations and suspicious underground recruiters, and Syam was quickly found by them. He didn't have any meaningless thought of avenging his father at all, and wasn't interested in their intents to inspire feelings in him. What interested him was the monetary reward they provided. Syam merely considered for 3 days before agreeing signing up with a

recruiter who was pretending to be a religious person. After a simple oath, he undertook the required training in an old mosque, and got in with everyone before entering outer space with his colleagues whose names he didn't even know.

"That's right, this is a job." Syam muttered. As it's a job, no matter whether it's the disgusting feeling of icy cold underwear or the claustrophobic nature of the aluminum and fiberglass spacesuit, he could still take it. This wasn't because of some ideology or a revolution. He was different from the religious fanatics who swore to carry out suicide attacks. Surviving, finishing the job and getting his payment was everything. He had no choice if he wanted to let his mother and little sister live an ordinary life.

If not for that, who would come to this place? If he had a decent job, if he had money, if he didn't draw the 'eliminated in life' tag…

(But, everyone, remember that even with this, there are 5 billion humans left on Earth. This is the same population as during the 20th century, when people started to take note of the population explosion. This number is still too great to let the Earth recover naturally. The ideal situation is to reduce the population to 2 billion.

Even if a Lagrange Point can have two Sides built in it, the upper limit of Sides will still be ten, and it's possible to let tens of billions of people live in outer space. However, assuming that the completion of construction requires hundreds of years; nobody knows what the population would be then. It would be overly optimistic to assume that the Earth's environment had recovered by then. Right now, we can only hope that the wisdom of humanity 100 years later will settle this.

I hope that everyone who opposes the space migration plan can understand this. We, humanity, established this overall authority in the Earth Federation government and had to fulfill this seemingly impossible plan. Let us stop this self-destruction and look 100 years into the future. A common cry is that the space migration plan is the Federation's plan to abandon…)

The scholar's voice was suddenly interrupted, and an unnatural music filled the silence. (Eh—even though the topic isn't over, right now, there's footage of the change in calendar happening in areas all over the world. First, the image from New York City, still recovering from war…) As he listened to the voice of the broadcaster, Syam tugged at the cable and moved forward.

Was it because the topic of abandoning people wasn't supposed to be mentioned? Even though the Federation government claimed to be

democratic, the censorship of information in the media by the government caused the actual report to be held for a long time. (Idiot). A colleague muttered as the voices of the interviews with the residents of New York overlapped.

(Why did he cut it off? Wasn't he just hailing the Federation?)

(That Queen's Scholar really spoke too much truth!)

(Worrying about 100 years later? Worry about your tomorrow!)

Laughter of mockery rang throughout the wireless communicator, but it didn't remain for long. Syam remained silent and headed towards the airlock on the worker ship.

There's no need to worry about weight in space, but the mass wouldn't disappear. The moment he touched the airlock, Syam used both hands to support his mass and the spacesuit that had life support inside it. Just as he was about to pull the handle, the blue light of the Earth shone into his eyes through the round plates of the mirror.

In the atmosphere that was divided into day and night, there is a string of light that is hard to tell whether it was red or green. It was an aurora. It seemed that 'Laplace' moved above the South Pole. As he looked at this mystically beautiful line, Syam felt a little moved, but he immediately looked away and pulled the handle of the airlock.

There was no need to embrace and feel everything. He should be going back after finishing his work. On hearing the slightly hasty breathing, Syam started to think of his mother and sister and wonder how they were.

(Greetings, citizens of Earth and Space. I'm the Prime Minister of the Earth Federation, Ricardo Marcenas.)

At 23:45 Greenwich Mean Time, the Prime Minister's speech began as planned. Syam finished getting away, and was in the worker ship cabin leaving the orbit of 'Laplace', watching the live telecast on a small screen.

(The end of A.D. is nigh, and we shall enter an unknown territory called Universal Century. During this momentous time, I am glad to have the honor, as the first Prime Minister of the Earth Federation government, to talk to 'all of humanity'. So allow me to express my gratitude here.

When I was young, the Prime Minister or the President would only talk to the citizens of their own countries. A state is a governing system of the land and the people on it, and ultimately exists to ensure that their

own countries were safe. And right now, for us, who have achieved the longstanding desire to unify the world, we have defined the errors in Nationalism. Just as humans can't exist on their own, we know that countries can't operate alone. Especially when it comes to an important issue like the Earth in crisis, where no previous nation was able to come up with an effective counter. The population issues that were addressed at the end of the 20th century, like drying up of resources, environmental destruction through pollutions…to address these irreversible problems, we need all of the knowledge that all of us have.)

In the small cabin, there were 14 people watching the screen on the wall. Other than the two pilots in the cockpit, everyone that took part in the work was here. Syam thought that nobody present looked like they were suited to be the Prime Minister of outer space.

The wrinkles on the 'worker head's face hid his many years of hard work and manual labor. This man who was viewed as the leader plucked his nostril hairs and he blew it away as they were stuck to his face due in the zero gravity. If this were seen by the astronauts who paved the way for space exploration, they would be already be crying at the fact that even people like him could enter Outer Space in the Universal Century.

(Not a 'Me' that belongs to any country or tribe, but a 'me' that belongs to humanity. If we don't have this objective view, we wouldn't be able to have today. The past 50 years, since we began this grand scheme, have not been smooth sailing for the Earth Federation government or the human migration to space plan. In fact, we had to go through much in order to break apart countries, races, religions…all these obstacles to a united humanity.

But right now, we have this new living habitat, the space colonies. The migration shall begin officially, and many people living in space colonies will be the norm in future generations. This glorious result of humanity uniting together, is to save the Earth from us crushing it.)

In the residential area of 'Laplace', at a circular podium, Prime Minister Marcenas was using his normal, steady expression that was usually shown on television as he faced the camera. The people sitting in front of the podium were the representatives of the Federation countries. The screen showed them looking serious. Syam looked at the screen and wondered about the outcome his gang's work would cause.

The concave lens that formed 'Laplace' would follow a non-designated action according to the program Syam and the others installed. What should have happened at midnight was reflecting sunlight onto the

Earth's surface, showing the words 'Goodbye AD, Hello, UC' in the atmosphere.

(If Anno Domini was really the infancy of humanity, then the Universal Century shall be the next state. We're not lowering the population through birth control, but chose to open more space for the population to move. A baby that climbs out of the cradle must continue to grow. In the process of fulfilling the plan to migrate to space, we're proving to the entire world that we can co-exist for one goal. Then, what's next?

Universal Century. In ordinary terms it means 'A Century for everyone'. The age of outer space should be written as 'Universe Century', but we deliberately used the word 'Universal', which means 'for all', as the name for the new century.)

In fact, the process activated before midnight. Under the thousands of concave mirrors, the mirrors that had the program installed started to change directions and focus the light on a certain residential area of 'Laplace'.

(I was born in the old United States of America, spent my infant years in Germany, my youth in France, and my student life in Asia. I married my wife, who's of Arabic and European descent, and my parents were about the same. Looking back at my ancestors, I find that I have more than 30 bloodlines within me. All the skin colors, all the bloodlines of all the races reside in me. It's because of this 'normalcy' that I was able to attain the unique honor of being the first Prime Minister of the Earth Federation government. I believe that there are many who share such a background. As the technological advancement began officially in the 21st century, and as the uniformity of economies caused the world to unite, the various of bloodlines and skin colors began to mix. The Federation government established a world without country borders, designated a standard language for the entire world. These things, along with the mixing of bloodlines are no longer anything special.

As humans need to reside in outer space, it's important for all of humanity to unite together. We can't let this miracle become a special occasion. We must normalize that fact that humanity has united, not rejecting each other, not hating each other, and become one race as we head to a wider universe. The term Universal Century includes our hopes.)

As the station's orbit and the equator were at right angles, 'Laplace' wouldn't orbit behind the Earth, but instead orbit such that the sun always shines on it. A part of the concave mirror that had been adjusted continued to reflect the sunlight, gathering the light and focusing it on a certain point.

(I don't belong to any religion, but I'm not an atheist. I believe that a healthy representation of the human spirit would be to ascend to a higher plane, to give laws to ourselves, as we set higher bars for ourselves. During the Anno Domini Era, these Holy Scriptures were spread from man to man. Even without mentioning the Ten Commandments of Moses, every religion teaches doctrines on how people should live and face the Earth. These weren't viewed as human words, but rather as a contract with God.

And now, we're about to say goodbye to the century of Gods and accept the time of a new contract. This time, it's not to surpass God, but to communicate with the God inside us, as we move up to a higher plane. The contract of the Universal Century should be born of all of humanity's consciousness.)

As it was a vacuum, the temperature of the concentrated heat focused by the countless concave mirrors would be an absolute temperature of 5500 degrees, and the numerous light rays that would become heat rays would burn a block of the 'Laplace' residential area—the water supply circuit in the environmental controls. Of course, these were invisible light rays. Unless they noticed the focal point of the intense irradiation, even the Salamis-class ships surrounding the area wouldn't discover it.

(I suppose quite a few people know about the origin of the name of the Prime Minister's Residence 'Laplace'. This was the name of a physicist in 18th century France. Laplace felt that no matter how big or small, if we completely analyze anything, such as the movement of a particle, we can thoroughly predict its future. This kind of thought was later disproven by Quantum Mechanics. Right now, though, we've proven that the future can't be predicted. And we use this name in the opposite of its meaning and called this Prime Minister's Residence 'Laplace', to mean 'many possibilities in the future'.

Everyone knows that there was quite the controversy over the Prime Minister's residence being a space station orbiting around the Earth. From a transportation and security viewpoint, this wasn't really a good choice. However, we are about to advance into the Universal Century, and outer space shall become mankind's new home. As a human being, I feel that there are some differences between Earth and Outer Space that I have to personally experience. Thus I used the authority of the Prime Minister to make this decision. And there is no better stage to change the calendar on the last day of Anno Domini and to start the Universal Century than this space station.)

The half of 'Laplace' which was being lit by the sun had a temperature

of 120 degrees Celsius. The dark side was a chilling cold of negative 120 degrees Celsius. Thus, the water supply circuit that moves through the residential area controlled the environment and the temperature. And right now, it was like putting a magnifying glass in the middle as the concentrated heat rays were moving through the mirrored areas on the top and the bottom as they continued to burn the water supply circuits.

(Today, there are more than 100 representatives from different countries in the Earth Federation. After some discussion, we shall sign the charter of the Universal Century. This Charter shall be known as the Laplace Charter, and it shall act as a contract between Humanity and the World.

This is based on the agreement from everyone in the Earth Federation government, and no mention of God is in it. We shall not mention Humanity's original sin. After this, we are to face our final judgment, and then we shall break the deadlock in our hearts. Our destiny will be in our hands.)

The focused rays burned the metal on the surface, causing the water in the supply circuit to boil and become steam. Before the sensors even realized something was wrong, the pipes had already burst from the internal pressure. The pressure inside the residential area immediately shot up, and as oxygen broke free from steam due to the high temperature—

(Right now, we have a vast and endless universe in front of us, one that is filled with all sorts of hidden possibilities, an ever-changing future. No matter how you came to be standing on this entrance, you have no need to bring your past into the new world. We are now starting at the beginning, and there is no need to be troubled about other people writing the scripts in your life. Just use the God in you to look clearly at the future that is about to begin.

Right now, it is 23:59 Greenwich Mean Time. I ask that everyone who is watching this telecast, if possible, please pray silently with me for one moment. Think about Anno Domini, which will soon pass, think about the history of Humanity that everyone made, and offer your blessings.

I hope that the journey of all humanity into outer space shall be stable. I hope that the Universal Century is the age where results succeed. And I believe that, lying dormant in our hearts, the God called possibilities—)

5, 4, 3, 2, 1…00:00. The image of the screen was switched to a view of

‘Laplace’.

Universal Century 0001, January 1st.

Suddenly, static brushed past the screen as a white light was released. The next moment, the structure of ‘Laplace’ silently collapsed.

The delicate artistry of the ring collapsed terribly as it exploded from inside, and a large amount of building materials, walls and glass fragments were scattered all over the place. The concave mirrors of the two disks that were spinning on either side of the donut ring broke, one by one, losing their silver shine. The two mirror surfaces that linked the living quarters to the rotary axis distorted as the crumpled donut and the two dirty broken mirrors became worse than trash as they floated around in vacuum. The scattered debris hit the surrounding patrol ships, and those Salamis-class ships that were unluckily enough to be hit directly showed a light ring of explosion. As the large space station laid in the background, these were all little light spots decorating the area as they covered the collapsed ‘Laplace’ like flowers—

It was a majestic, short, and disappointing scene. The spaceships and space stations, which all had large amounts of air pressure inside, were like metallic balloons. By increasing the air pressure inside so much until it becomes explosive, they would easily burst. Syam had heard of such a phenomenon happening. But as he thought about the destruction of the Prime Minister’s office, which had signified the might of the Federation; as he thought about the space migration plan of humanity; as he thought about how hundreds or even thousands of people were immediately thrown into vacuum, ripped the shreds, becoming frozen corpses before they even felt death; as he thought about how the first step of the Universal Century, the significant event in human history, and also the worst space terrorist attack, an attack so bloody, that it was really hard for him to be satisfied with it…

(We’re bringing the news to you. Just a few minutes ago, the Prime Minister’s residence ‘Laplace’ seemed to have a certain accident. Details are sparse, but it’s said to be a major incident…)

The image was switched to a television studio, where a broadcaster who couldn’t hide his tension and excitement was reporting. Everyone remained silent and watched the screen. Finally, the ‘worker head’ spoke, “We succeeded. Now we can have even more comfortable lives!” His words had a rare joking tone. However, there wasn’t a hint of laughter in his eyes, and beside him, the captain, who would normally follow up such a remark, remained silent.

(The fates of Prime Minister Marcenas and the national representatives are still unknown in this time of crisis…) The voice of the broadcaster rang as the news was reported. For some reason, Syam started to recall the contents of the speech the Prime Minister had just made. Not needing to bring the past life into the new world. Not being troubled by other people writing their own lives. These words that were like foreign objects that exploded and surged in his mind.

"Our destinies are in our hands," the Prime Minister had said. Isn't the 'our' he mentioned referring to us? Not because we were the 'eliminated ones,' but because the Prime Minister wanted to convey some important message to us?— As Syam thought this, he remembered that the Prime Minister had became a frozen block too. The next second, Syam forgot about it, and he began wondering whether he could return back to Earth, whether he could claim his reward, all sorts of realistic uncertainties. This was why the worker ship got ready to accelerate a second time, and why the inside of the ship got busy.

To enter the Earth via low orbit, the ship had to maintain a speed of 8 kilometers per second. If it was too slow, the ship would burn up due to gravity and air resistance. On the other hand if the speed were too high, the ship would rise out of orbit. The worker ship had accelerated once already, and it was still higher than 'Laplace'. However, the ship needed to accelerate to 10 kilometers per second to completely break free from orbit.

The escape plan the 'organization' prepared was simple. Once it broke free from low orbit, the ship would move into a geosynchronous satellite orbit, 35,000 kilometers above the Earth, dock with the satellite in that orbit. Once the ship docked, everyone would leave the worker ship, sneak into the facility, blend in with the workers there, and take a shuttle back to Earth.

The scattered debris of 'Laplace' were gradually accelerating and starting to orbit higher than their original position. If this kept up, there was a risk that the debris would hit the worker ship. The Federation patrol ships weren't completely destroyed, and they should be hurriedly securing a space territory. After some pushing, as they weren't used to zero gravity, Syam and the others finally managed to stabilize themselves in the crude chairs in the cabin. Three days after they had gotten to outer space, the men's faces became 'moon faces' (as the fluids change in nature under zero gravity, causing their faces to swell). They lined up against the walls, and soon after, the rocket fuel ignition caused the ship to jerk, and everyone was pressed into the chairs by pressure.

The high-power laser that took the place of the spark plug in the laser rocket fuel engine resulted in three times the thrust of previous rockets. Though it was in a ‘safety driving’ mode of an acceleration of 1 kilometer every two minutes, to a body used to zero gravity, the weight of 1G is still tough to handle. Syam closed his eyes and grabbed the edge of the chair.

The acceleration soon stopped. Five hours from now, they would enter their orbit and come into contact with the industrial satellite. "Once we’re there, I’ll be able to return to Earth. How’re my mom and sister? Do I have enough money to see a doctor? Once I get back to the country, we should move away from that cramped rabbit cage of an apartment and move to a more appropriate place! Let’s go buy some land and restart my life as a shepherd. That’s good, I don’t want to stay in outer space. I don’t want to get involved with the ‘organization’. I want to use this money to buy my life that won’t be eliminated—"

At this moment, a terrifying shock shook the body of the ship.

'KLANG!’ With a heavy-sounding dropping sound, the tail of the ship gave an uncomfortable jerk. One could hear that it wasn't from the engine itself. Everyone was already used to the weird noises from unidentified objects or hard things rubbing against each other in outer space, but that sharp sound that hit the ship didn't sound normal. Everyone look at the ceiling of the ship, shouting “Did we get hit by ‘Laplace’s’ debris?!” The 'Worker Head' immediately took the phone inside the cockpit. Syam stared at his unhappy face.

“They're coming, the dead of 'Laplace' are chasing us...!”

The guy viewed as the captain clutched his head and screamed with an abnormal tone, and Syam inadvertently started to shudder too. However, the 'Worker Head' quickly shouted back, “Shut up!”

“It seems that something hit near the engine. The thrust is decreasing. 'Shepherd', go outside to take a look.”

As he said that, the 'Worker Head' put down the phone, and watched Syam’s eyes. The reason why Syam was called was definitely because their eyes just met, but like usual, the 'Worker Head's’ tone wouldn't allow for any refusal. Syam wordlessly undid the buckle on his chair, and headed towards the airlock.

As there was no acceleration, the cabin had returned to zero gravity, but the man viewed as the captain continued to lower his head as if the gravity were higher than ever, and didn't even look up even when Syam entered the airlock.

It is said that before they exited the ship to work outside, astronauts had to reduce the air pressure inside their bodies. Improvements in modern spacesuits removed this hassle though. Syam put on the helmet, took the life support backpack from the wall. A minute later he was ready to open the hatch and go outside.

As the air in the airlock vanished, all the sounds vanished with it, and Syam could only hear his own breathing. After checking that the hook beside the airlock and the cable were tightly secured, Syam floated out of the worker ship and let his body move to the end of the ship.

It wasn't accelerating, but the worker ship wasn't stopped either. Right now, it would be traveling at a speed of 9 kilometers per second, which would allow the ship to break free from low orbit. While undergoing training half a year ago, Syam still wondered whether he would be abandoned outside the ship like this. However, as the humans that were being transported were moving as well, they won't stop unless the met any obstacles or resisting forces. For example, someone jumping outside a plane will fall down due to gravity acting on their body, and would slow down because of air resistance. These forces didn’t exist in outer space, so a human leaving a spaceship that was moving at 9 kilometers per second, would follow the ship at that same speed. Which meant that Syam would feel that he and the ship were sitting still.

Thus, Syam had to use a hand-held booster in order to move in the opposite direction of the worker ship. More accurately, he wasn't 'moving forward' to the end of the ship, but slowing his body down and letting the ship 'move more'. Syam pulled the safety cable to bring his relatively velocity to the ship back to zero, and started to investigate the exhaust pipe on the back of the cylindrical ship.

He immediately found the problem. The fuel pipe attached outside the ship was broken, and chemical fuel was being spilled. He didn’t know whether the pipe had been hit by small asteroids, or by the debris of 'Laplace'. Seeing the leaking fuel that froze as soon as it got outside, Syam remembered the guy they viewed as the captain saying 'they're after us', and he started to feel some goosebumps.

It was common to collide with space dust. Syam used what little knowledge he had from his training to calm his anxiety and notified the ship about the damage. the ‘Worker Head’ answered: (Close the control valve. We can accelerate with what we have left. Hurry up and get back.) Syam cut the frozen fuel pillar on the pipe and threw it far away. If he left it alone, there would be an ice pillar floating and probably ending up in the ship’s exhaust stream. If that happened

while the exhaust was firing, there would be a very large explosion.

Syam pulled the safety cable and went back to the airlock. As his back turned away from the Earth and the Sun, he witnessed an incredible sight. He looked at the stars, undulled by the atmosphere, that were like a carpet giving off silver light. He could see no moons, no artificial satellites, just a hunge array of dazzlingly bright stars. He could barely use his naked eyes to look between the stars; it was an abyss the bottom of which even the speed of light couldn't reach.

"It's so memorable." This thought flashed through Syam's mind. Just at the moment when he was troubled by this idle thought, the wireless communicator was cut off, and with a sharp flash of light, Syam saw the airlock burst into flames.

The flames expanded for a moment, swallowing the entire worker ship. The moment before he was caught in the shockwave, Syam saw the spacesuit of the pilot flung out from the cockpit, just like many of the burning debris. The hull of the worker ship exploded from inside, and then Syam was blown away by the shockwave of the explosion. The uneven inertia caused his body to spin vertically, and through the visor, he could see the Earth and the stars quickly moving by.

The stars, the sun and the Earth drew dazzling long arcs as they moved up, and Syam was moving further and further away from the scrap metal of the worker ship. "First, I should stop spinning, find something and see if my spacesuit is alright." His mind flashed through the response scenario he had learnt, but the shockwave had numbed his senses and he couldn't operate well. Syam could only flail his limbs weakly. "What happened? Why did the worker ship explode? Didn't I throw the leaking fuel pillar out? There's nothing else wrong!"

"No, that's not it. That's an explosion from within. Something happened inside the ship. Something exploded…what? Other than fuel, we weren't carrying anything dangerous! Those allies of ours who were in charge of managing stocks checked them. There can't be any explosions unless something deliberately brought one on—"

His gut suddenly shrank; Syam widened his eyes in fear. Betrayal, explosion, silence. Many words came in his mind as he watched the scene in front of him, and tried to come up with a conclusion. However, he was ultimately swallowed by fear and chaos, and finally, the only words he could remember were the words of that guy, the captain, that were spoken in an abnormal tone 'they're here'.

They're the dead of 'Laplace'. The thousands of dead that had been alive several minutes ago became countless corpses that caught up

with the worker ship, bared their fangs and attacked, taking suitable revenge on the people who killed them. Killing the ‘Worker Head’ and everyone else inside the cabin, and letting Syam, who was coincidentally outside the ship, sink to a gradual death.

The severed safety cable crossed him, and the debris of the worker ship were floating away. The life support in Syam’s suit could only work for 8 hours maximum, and even if a nearby ship got a distress signal, Syam’s chances of being saved within such a short time was gradually approaching zero as he himself was moving at roughly the speed of sound. Would he float to the Earth or into the abyss of Outer Space?

No, before either of those, a part of his mind calmly predicted, he would float into the debris field of ‘Laplace’, diced up by the metal shrapnel that was moving at 8 kilometers per second. And at the same time, fear went through all the hairs on his body, filling the entire spacesuit. Syam cried out: "I don’t want to die! I don’t want to die! I don’t want to die like this, I don’t want this life where I’m still eliminated in the end!"

"I have to get back home. My mom and my sister, Sarah, are still waiting for me! I don’t want to die I don’t want to die I don’t want to die —" Syam prayed silently and closed his eyes as he heard the siren that rang because of the erratic breathing. As he opened his eyes again, he saw something strange.

As Syam saw the other side of the burning worker ship, a profile of a person appeared. Then another profile appeared, both wearing spacesuits he had never seen before and using thrusters on their backs to move forward. The profiles grew bigger and bigger, and one of the helmet-like heads gave off a red light and pointed what looked suspiciously like a gun at Syam.

Syam subconsciously used both hands to protect his body, but that huge, golem-like spacesuit ignored Syam and continued to move forward. The shield that was installed on the suit’s shoulders, the deep green body and the head was giving of the shine of a single red eye. This wasn’t a spacesuit, it was a large object that wasn’t human. What was unbelievable was that their heights were close to 20m The suits grazed past Syam like ghosts, one after the other. In front of them was the shining blue figure of the Earth and more large golems that accompanied a large cylinder amid countless explosions.

He had seen this large cylindrical steel bottle with three mirrored wings on TV earlier. These were the basis of the Space Migration plan, the ‘Island 3’ type Space Colonies. But right now, those three rectangular

wings were tattered, and the steel surface was covered in ugly burn marks. The whole thing looked just like junk hardware. This structure was humanity's greatest construct, and even through TV, he could feel the majestic impact of a brand new space colony as it started to touch the Earth's profile.

The one-eyed giants continued to fire as they escorted the colony, shooting down the resisting ships and the fighter jets. The giants continued to wreak havoc by moving through the colony. The colony was 30 kilometers long and more than 6 kilometers in diameter. As it started to sink into the atmosphere, it began to burn. When Syam realized that the golems were trying to force the colony to hit Earth, he inadvertently shouted: "'STOP IT!'"

"If that kind of thing hit, the world would be in a mess. Mom's on Earth! Sarah's on Earth! Stop it!"

The golems didn't respond though, and the burning colony turned their bodies fiery red. The peeled mirrored blocks and the colony cylinder became a fireball and turned the clouds into steam as they continued to fall onto the Earth. This was the Final Judgment, Syam thought. To end this world that's filled with guilt and sin, and leading the people who did good deeds to Heaven for God to judge...is it unavoidable? He remembered the words of a certain someone who said that 'our destinies are in our hands'. These words blew aside any realistic view, and Syam widened his eyes that he never dared close.

The grey and brown exhaust smoke stained the thin veil of the atmosphere, and the colony became a large meteor that impacted the surface of the Earth. A corner of the Earth's profile shone like the dawn. As the shine expanded, Syam cried. He was angry at his uselessness, remorseful, depressed about it. He felt lots of emotions that he couldn't sort out explode in him and rise out as steaming liquid from his eyes. Finally, the light became bigger, and a light that was stronger than the sun appeared. Then, suddenly, everything was calm again.

Syam slowly opened his eyes. The spinning of his body stopped. The siren on his life support function stopped, indicating that his breathing and pulse went back to normal. Through the visor, the profile of the Earth looked still. There wasn't any colony that fell, and of course he didn't see the one-eyed golems.

A tear that came from his eye floated in the helmet before being sucked away by the suit's waste removal mechanism. Was that…a dream? Syam was puzzled for a while. That was an intensely realistic nightmare. He didn't think that his brain had the ability to create such

an illusion. Syam looked around, still seeing remnants of the dream, and found that he was floating in a field of shrapnel.

The debris, ruptured materials, and broken glass, were obviously the remains of ‘Laplace’. The debris scattered in this orbit, and the fragments that had been pushed higher, were flying at the same relative speed as Syam.

The surrounding debris floated around, seemingly stopping. The debris in the vacuum created by Syam’s passing would always orbit a space suit. Thinking blankly, Syam had new doubts in his lonely heart, and then noticed something shining in front of him.

The object reflected the light of the Earth, giving off a bright glow, which made Syam think it was a fragment of the concave mirror block. The portable thruster that could be used for another 10 seconds, and Syam used it now to move towards the shining object.

Unbelievably, he didn’t have any fears of death; the memory of his vision throbbed inside him in an even greater manner. In the boundless universe, two objects that were as small as mustard seeds would move toward each other at the same speed and touch each other. As Syam faced this once in a few billion moment of coincidence, he started to doubt whether his nerves were all numb.

That object continued to spin slowly, and the shiny surface reflected the light of the world. Syam used the portable thruster bit by bit and let his body stop in front of the object.

It was a little cracked, but the object was a hexagonal shape that was 3 meters in diameter and 30 centimeters thick. Syam closed in on the shiny surface as he slowly stretched out his gloved hand.

And the spacesuit that was reflected in the object itself reached its hand out, as both fingers that were moving in opposite directions touched silently—

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As he reached out and grabbed the emptiness, Syam Vist woke up.

There was nothing, and there was no sign of himself wearing a spacesuit like in the reflection of the object. As he looked from the bed to the ceiling, he could see the starry sky that didn't flicker. Of course, these weren't really stars, but a hologram that was displayed on the domed roof. It was a screen of a starry sky that was meticulously detailed, no different from what his naked eye saw.

He reached out his five fingers toward this fake space as his wrinkled arm grabbed at air—his youthful days were gone. Seeing the back of his age-wrinkled arm, Syam realized that he had merely been dreaming and heaved a sigh of relief. He hadn't woken from cryo-sleep. If he had, he would feel pain as his body became active, and his body couldn't take the pain of fluids being injected into the frozen cells…

Suddenly, he sensed the presence of a person. In this space, everything other than the bed was full of stars and couldn't be

distinguished from one another. A man was standing silently at the door. “Is it Cardeas?” Syam asked. The air that shook slightly answered him. He saw the tall and lankly figure of Cardeas Vist walk out from the darkness of the universe and arrive near the bed.

Cardeas was wearing a collared suit and a similar Nehru jacket, the perfect traditional attire of the Vist Foundation. He had a sharp expression under his silver eyebrows, and was more than 60 years old, but it was hard to tell that his body was aging. He wasn’t hiding nor was he flaunting his sense of authority, and the straight and primp posture that could defeat all envy and slander made Syam feel that Cardeas was indeed worthy of being the leader of the Vist Foundation.

Besides finance, steel-making, construction and other basic enterprises, the Vist Foundation showed most of its power through logistics, entertainment, and even department stores. One single expression from Cardeas would move complicated, yet diverse crowds and investments, but he was definitely not the king of hidden plans. Having taken over the mantle many years ago, he was used to people referring to the stench of the underground links the Vist Foundation had as the ‘fortune’, and he was also used to the Foundation’s corrupted coexistence with the Federation government. Right in front of Syam was the face of the relative who looked stronger and stronger every day.

Syam had had many children, and most of them became a part of the underground kingdom of the vast Vist Foundation. However, other than his second son’s son, Cardeas, nobody else was capable enough to inherit Syam’s throne. Throughout history, there were many cases of the first generation starting a enterprise, the second generation building on the enterprise, and the third generation ruining it. However, Cardeas’ rebellious nature when he was young caused him to be open-minded and not be poisoned by the Vist Foundation. As a student, he left home, hid his real name, and joined the Federation’s space army as a fighter jet pilot. Such an experience caused him to be a rare breed amongst a family that was already poisoned by authority. Unlike his father, who was an heir before him, the open-minded Cardeas was envied by his own family as he leap-frogged the heir hierarchy, and could continue to maintain his strength without being bothered by them.

However, the never-before-seen rare breed was merely his exterior. Cardeas himself had a complicated side of delicateness and straightforwardness that could read the hearts of any man. Even Syam, who had lived for a long time, couldn’t tell what this person, the second head who knew everything, including the truth behind his

father's mysterious death, was thinking. However, he would regularly come over to visit Syam, show a cryptic expression and make the old man, who had been sleeping continuously, meaninglessly remember all his past lies. That was the sort of person Cardeas Vist was. Syam was the leader of the Vist family, a family with more than 200 members, including affiliations, but it was an undeniable fact that there was no one but this grandson of his with shom he could share his lies.

Looking down at Syam as he lay on the bed, Cardeas asked "How are you?" His eyes hid a suppressed emotion that couldn't be explained by being second fiddle and being the second head of the family. Syam touched the bracelet-shaped remote control, engraved with the Vist family crest, and took the bottle of water from the table beside him.

"The assumption that cryogenics can regain my youth was thoroughly denied by my body. There's no difference at all. I'm so tired."

Syam felt the cold water enter his wilted body and sighed. Freezing one's body and using cryosleep to slow the metabolism wasn't a complete technology. In fact, only a few research facilities and hospitals were undergoingtesting it, and those that volunteered for the process could be said to be lab rats. However, on hearing that cryogenics were finally practical, Syam bought every institute involved, including the research facility.

Syam would use vacations or recuperation as an excuse to gain time when managing the finances of the Foundation's operations, and the long sleep after his retirement allowed him to gain nearly 20 years. But the primary doctor's diagnosis was that Syam's body was equivalent to that of a 93-year-old. His wife was already dead, half of his children were already dead, and he alone supported his own body, defying the natural aging of time. This was even more awkward than being interrogated, and anyone would find it unbearable to see an old man so insistent on being alive. But even if he was mocked for this, for the sake of the Vist Foundation, for the curse that laid sealed behind the prosperity, he had to continue living even if he had to lie.

As the keeper of <<Laplace's Box>>, the curse that was granted to this world and sealed almost a 100 years ago—

"How is it?"

And the moment where it all had to end arrived. Syam used a business-like tone to ask Cardeas, and Cardeas used a similar to answer, "As we planned, it will be executed 3 days from now."

"I will head to <<Industrial 7>> directly to meet the collector."

“You’ll head over yourself?”

“I can’t delegate this job to anyone.”

Cardeas smiled as Syam said that. As he smiled, he showed the daring nature that defined him when he was a pilot. Even in his late age, he still believes in his own body. Syam, who was unable to get up, could not ever remember feeling like that.

“We can finally use it with the <<UC plan>>. Before I hand it over, I would like to try it.”

“The curiosity of an ex-pilot…”

“You can call it desire, but in fact, that is a really good machine.”

The leader of Vist Foundation sounded like he wanted to be a test pilot. "But that’s good," Syam thought wryly.

Cardeas was the one who single-handedly decided on the successor, and on the the plan that solved the difficult issue of passing the ‘Box’ on to a third party. Even though Syam’s own interest was somewhat involved, everything was ready. He could only allow Cardeas to do it.

“The <<Unicorn>> was created by the <<UC Plan>>. We must make the beast of possibilities lead the way to <<Laplace's Box>>…”

Syam muttered as he again felt the moral implication behind this. However, he also felt that something like this would always happen when something important occurred. Nothing was planned at the beginning, but coincidences caused things to move about. That’s right. Life was just about being manipulated by fate.

At that time, the 17-year-old Syam would run out of the worker ship, float into the endless vacuum, meet the debris field of <<Laplace>>, obtain the <<Box>> over there, all because…

Cardeas gave a mystified expression as he saw Syam deep in thought. Syam lifted his eyes and looked at the image of the starry skies that filled the ceiling, and asked, “How’s the investigation on the recipient’s trust?”

“The fact is that this is a deal with Anaheim Electronics. It’s disguised as an underground dealing, but that’s the first step to opening the window. In the current situation now, this was the only viable option.”

Cardeas named what was undoubtedly the largest enterprise of all the businesses in the Vist Foundation. Like its name, Anaheim began as an electronics company in North America, and was now the largest

weapons supplier for the Earth Federation army, and the largest corporation in the world. This electronics company had become a leading military enterprise, and also a subsidiary of the Vist Foundation.

Since Anaheim Electronics was involved in the dealing, it could be seen as Vist Foundation being involved. Though the recipient's guarantee to collect would be the best possible, Cardeas' tone indicated that he wasn't sure. On one hand, he had to bring blood relatives of his into the business to stabilize the underground empire even more. On the other hand, he had to keep the reins tight to prevent them from going out of control. As he contemplated the loneliness of someone sitting on a throne, Syam asked, "Is it Alberto?" Cardeas looked away and answered simply, "Yes. That man who could barely earn small change."

"No matter what, this is a plan that relies on uncertainty. No matter how much we investigate, we can't possibly lose anything."

Cardeas hid the shakiness inside him and used a dry and stiff voice to continue. But the way he was hiding his wavering so much showed that he still had a bit of youth in him. Syam didn't answer, as if he was impatient with his old and feeble body.

"It's only because we posses <<Laplace's Box>> that Vist Foundation even exits. This is entire affair amounts to breaking a 100-year alliance with the Federation. I admit that I made it a thorough secret, but someone should have realized it already. It's not just the Foundation itself. Even Anaheim Electronics may take action."

"Ever since Melanie left active duty, Anaheim has become more and more useless. It's about time to show them how to continue operations without relying on the Federation."

"This is basically a matter of life and death to them. Martha won't just sit back and watch, right? We're basically abusing our authority here!"

This was the expression and voice of a man who knew about developing enough authority and influence to get away with murder. Syam looked back at Cardeas' eyes, and pictured his second son's face overlapping Cardeas'. "There's no need to worry." He said that not only to Cardeas, but also to himself.

"Until they die, those without power can't imagine how much duty and responsibility those with power had to bear."

Syam spoke as he looked up at the starry sky on the ceiling. After a while, Cardeas responded. "You really haven't changed at all, leader,"

his gentle voice had some grimace behind it. The warm voice of his descendant made Syam lose his breath. He asked himself: "Haven't I changed?"

"Haven't changed? No, I changed a long time ago. That 17 year old man in my dreams, that young man who thought that he'd tasted all of the world's bitterness, probably wouldn't recognize that this old man that's lying on the bed is who he would become. Living more than 100 years is enough to change a person. I don't know when I lost my initial goal. I set up this system for it, and continued to expand the system endlessly just to survive. 100 years is long enough to let a person's or organization's lies grow. The Earth Federation government was like this. The Vist Foundation was like this. Anaheim Electronics was like this. And I also was like this—"

After Syam had been miraculously saved from the explosion of his ship by a civilian ship that was in the area he went back to Earth with the 'Box'. He didn't go back to his hometown, and he never saw his mother or sister again. The poor and foolish young terrorist was scattered into space dust with his separatist comrades. If news that he had survived leaked out and messed up a certain person's script, then his newly-recovered life, and even his mother and sister would be in danger. Syam's experience with society allowed him to make that prediction with some degree of confidence.

Syam didn't know whether or not it was due to that person's script that all people who were related to the terrorists involved in the destruction of the 'Laplace' station were quickly investigated. The 'organization' and the separatist countries who supported them were all completely annihilated by the Federation Army. The Federation government then immediately reformed as a new government under the slogan of 'Remembering Laplace', and started its eradication of anti-government movements. The 'organization' that planned and executed the terrorist plot was begun by the liberals who wanted to take over the Marcenas administration. Many books and movies questioned if this was the truth, but the majority of people felt that it was just an uncreative conspiracy theory, and praised the Federation's enthusiasm in wiping out terrorism.

It's not that the people were stupid. The stupid ones were the separatists who were facing the start of the Universal Century and still arrogantly calling for people to give up on the administration and wanted civil wars for at least 10 years. People gave up on shapeless ideals and chose reality. It was just a first proof in reality that 'the majority's the smart one'. In Universal Century, the Federation government declared that they had 'erased all terrestrial conflicts in the

world', and clearly established the states in the Earth Federation, causing society to move into Universal Century. What Prime Minister Ricardo Marcenas wanted, humanity 'saying goodbye to the age of gods', was, ironically, completed because of his own death.

At that moment, Syam, who had become someone 'who no longer existed', used this unique trait to start a business. Even at the beginning of the Universal Century, the underground society of triads and gangsters still existed, and the social, political and economic stages that appeared on the forefront wasn't that much different from the Anno Domini Era. Syam managed to get his start here. As he got involved with a war of monopolies, he started getting involved with a certain enterprise whose headquarters was located in the North American region.

That enterprise called Anaheim Electronics was merely a normal-sized electronic company, but once it received Syam's rather beneficial assistance, it started to grow rapidly. That was Syam using the power of the <<Box>> to force the government to defeat opposing companies who were fighting for supremacy. As Syam continued to maintain his relations with the underground societies, he became an ally of Anaheim Electronics and married the daughter of the Managing Director. The family was old famous nobility from France and was a successful installation for 'a person who does not exist anymore' to appear again. And that famous Vist family had a grand old tradition of asking no questions and accepting anyone who had ability, even if the son-in-law that joined them was of unknown origins. Syam used the name of the Vist Foundation to create a public corporation. On the surface, it was a legitammate financial corporation that moved world heritage pieces like art or antiques to space colonies, which were more politically stable than Earth. In actual fact however, it was used to launder the money earned from various enterprises or investments and provides high ranking officials of the Federation government an opportunity to work after retirement. The co-existence between the Federation and the Vist Foundation was born at that moment.

Under the rigid control of the Federation government, the space migration plan was carried out successfully. Before Side 1 of L5 was complete, construction of Side 2 in L4 started, and the building of space colonies continued to develop. The number of <<Island 3>> colonies soon broke 100, and whether people were willing or not, they were dumped into outer space by the millions. Inadvertently, the number of space migrants grew, in stark contrast to the number of residents on Earth. As livestock and agriculture were able to operate in outer space, the age where economy and production couldn't operate

without outer space arrived. Strict restrictions were soon put in place on people moving on and off of Earth, and space residents almost had no chance of stepping onto Eath again. They adopted an ideology that Earth was a sacred ground. They viewed Earth as a sanctuary, and thought that it should be preserved as the birthplace of humanity. A lamentation of how space residents tried to sever their yearning for the Earth, and their revenge on those who still stayed on Earth.

In fact, the space resident plan the Federation government pushed forward started to hit a problem by year 0050, after the first phase was completed. Earth originally should have reached the minimum population for the environment to recover, but there were still lots of people staying on Earth and even developing in new areas. The Federation government itself was based on Earth, and only those involved in the government remained on Earth. The space colonies, bound by the one-sided laws of the central government could not express their views, and could only watch the Earth rotate silently. The Federation raised the ‘Laplace Tragedy’ to emphasize the danger of moving the government to outer space, but also froze the migration plans to the space colonies. This hypocritical act was almost admitting silently that they had ‘dumped enough people’, causing great dissatisfaction amongst the space residents. A certain thought appeared in a corner of outer space as if it gathered all the unhappiness.

The politician who raised this thought was Zeon Zum Deikun, and his beliefs were later adopted as the Principality of Zeon. Zeon carefully included the Nationalism of Sides that demanded self-government of space colonies, along with the sanctification of the Earth, becoming an ideal that included space biochemistry of mankind. Those space residents that were disillusioned by the space migration plan were awakened by Zeon’s Principles. The Federation government ignored this moment, but the Zeon movement spread from Side 3, behind the moon, and finally, half a century after the space migration plan began, Side 3 declared its independence.

It was a proud moment of revolution to the now-independent residents of Side 3, but to the Federation government, it was the first real threat they faced since they eliminated the separatists. The Federation government started to increase its suppression of Side 3 and increase the size of their space army. It started to build the latest model of the <<Salamis>>-class space navigation ships, far larger than the ships that guarded ‘Laplace’. In response, Side 3 built up its national defense in case of any aggression. Both sides remained at tense relations until the year 0079 in the Universal Century. Not caring about the

implications on economics and internal affairs, the self-proclaimed Principality of Zeon, Side 3, declared war on the Earth Federation, and the grand war began.

Since the war lasted for one year, it later became known as the One Year War. The Federation and Zeon continued to invest in Universal Century technology without restraint and the situation escalated into a war of mass destruction, becoming the most devastating war in human history. After this year of disaster, where more than half the population was wiped out, the Principality of Zeon finally lost the war, and an armistice was signed. The Earth Federation managed to keep its governmental structure. However, the escalating war between Earth and Space under the Principality of Zeon never ended, as there were many other conflicts for another 10 years and more, adding salt to the wounds of Earth before it could recover from the One Year War.

Such large expenditure and wastage caused Anaheim Electronics to gain a stable income through war, and it quickly became the largest enterprise on Earth. They absorbed and took over the military industry of the old Principality of Zeon, and almost single-handedly managed all the development of the Earth Federation's armaments. They used the excuse of charging each customer independently to work dealings with Anti-Earth Union Group, and did business fairly with both Earth and Space. Since Anaheim Electronics' resources mostly went to the Moon, people often dubbed them 'the rulers of the Moon', and others would even directly call them 'Merchants of Death'. However, behind Anaheim, there was the shadow of Vist Foundation and the 'Box' that allowed for their monopoly and the elimination of any competitors.

The Vist Foundation hid the <<Box>> for nearly 100 years, and could manipulate the Federation government whenever and however they wanted to. At the start of the Universal Century, the <<Box>> landed in Syam's hands at a chance of 1 in a billion. Humanity broke free from the chains of gravity, religions, and race, and should have gotten a <<Box>> that represented the New Covenant of the Universal Century, <<Laplace's Box>>. It sealed a seal that was 100 years long, and still remained with him. The dry and feeble body lay on the bed as Syam sighed.

He once had a chance to open the <<Box>>. He had a chance to immediately let the world collapse from the base on and bring 'the supposed future' the Universal Century should have had. Thus, he created the Vist Foundation. And even if he had to rely on cryogenics, he had to survive, to bear what is an overly heavy responsibility and duty for a human. "No, I shouldn't be thinking about excuses. I just don't have the courage and strength to open the box. I'm scared of the

illusion I saw—the hellish scenes of space colonies falling on Earth. Yet I watched this cruel imagery become reality and only focused my heart and soul on improving the Foundation's prosperity. I'm just a coward who lost my initial goal after 100 years, a coward who became distrusting of humans and still couldn't give up on my life and end it all."

The night side of the Earth was moving above them, and there was the thin veil of the atmosphere floating around it. Earth looked like it did 100 years ago, but in fact, countless 'colony drops' caused a large amount of dust to scatter, and the Earth's atmosphere looked as if it were stained. Syam watched the thin veil of the atmosphere and wanted to look at the imprint of this guilt. Guilt that wouldn't disappear for another thousand years. At this moment, he saw a human-shaped object pass in front of the Earth.

It looked as large as a little thumb, though the human-shaped object that was moving through the stars at high speed wasn't a human in a spacesuit, but a mobile suit. As Minovsky particles, which allowed for easy jamming of radar and electronic devices, were discovered, a mobile, human-shaped weapon became mainstream in space combat. The one-eyed giants he saw in his vision almost 100 years ago were now a common weapon, manufactured by Anaheim Electonics' assembly line, replacing tanks and fighter jets, and becoming the main weapon of the Earth Federation.

The first nation to successfully develop mobile suit technology was the Principality of Zeon. It brought an advantage to the Zeon forces just when they were severely disadvantaged. However, as the memories of the One Year War faded, this story was merely a footnote in a corner of a history book. After several years, once this Side 3, once called the Republic of Zeon, gives up its self-independence and returns to the Federation government, people will forget about that time. It's only to be expected that the space residents' passion in its demands for self-government and upsurge of classes would fall apart as the Principality of Zeon declined and finally disappeared in this dark and cold outer space.

The time was Universal Century 0096—the fervor for revolution had gone, and in the universe of concepts, even the stars were so cold.

"…It's time to activate <<Laplace's Box>>."

Feeling a chill all over himself, Syam spoke. "If the space residents lose this chance of independence, the Earth Sphere shall remain shut."

"But this may bring even more chaos to the world."

Cardeas responded calmly as he stood beside the bed. His lanky body looked like a pastor who witnessed a death on a patient's bed, but also like the figure of a death god. Syam smiled,

"It's better than being in stasis forever and slowly dying. If I can hand <<Laplace's Box>> over to anyone else, my role as guardian will be over. I don't want to defy nature and watch my grandson die."

"That's enough for the person that's to be entrusted with the <<Box>>." After saying that, Syam again confirmed that that person wasn't himself. No matter if it was him or the Vist Foundation, he could only wait. Though they benefited from the magic of the <<Box>> and had the power to move the world, they were content to be mere observers, watching everything. Like the meaning of the word itself, they were just watching.

A century had passed since Syam had found the <<Box>>, and there were signs that such observers were being born. Having entered the new environment called Outer Space, humanity gradually gained power that exceeded that of normal people. 100 years ago, the people gathered at 'Laplace' expected it earlier than anyone else. The god that resides in us. God's blessing called possibility was moving through the countless space colonies.

The new humans, called Newtypes by Zeon Zum Deikun; they will definitely be able to open the <<Box>>, ride on the beast of possibilities <<Unicorn>>, and see the contents of the <<Box>>, bringing the prayer of redemption from 'Laplace' to now and setting the Universal Century on the right path.

Of course, there's no evidence to prove these theories, and Syam knew that he was being reckless, but there wasn't much time left. He had to take action before it was too late to salvage the situation. Before the world completely collapsed, before the god known as possibilities extinguished itself, before this rotting thing that couldn't endure another frozen sleep…

"Can you forgive me?"

This was just him being opinionated, as Syam finally asked the question that burdened him with the heavy lies he knew about.

"This might bring an end to a world. Is there anyone who can forgive you other than me?"

Cardeas' answer to this was extremely clear. The lies and the pains were all gone in that instant. Syam was unable to respond to this kinship and looked at Earth displayed on the wall.

"You’re willing to forgive me? You’re forgiving this devil who took action on his own children in order to protect the 100 years of silence the Vist Foundation protects? You’re forgiving this inhuman grandfather who took your father away? You’re forgiving this man whose thoughts may be opinionated and send the world to destruction —"

Earth was about to face dawn from the front. The sun’s glow appeared on the long arc profile, and the white light shone through the atmosphere, causing the blue that was locked under the color of night to recover.

The light shone on Syam’s bed and Cardeas’ body as their two shadows became one. Syam basked in this intense glow that could burn all the remaining lies away. As the scene in front of him blured, Syam again fell into a deep sleep.

Chapter 1[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The ship's alarm sounded. Despite the goosebumps the sound caused, it made the mind focus as well. The girl went to window on the wall.

Outside the plastic board window was the vacuum of outer space. Right now, neither the Earth nor the moon could be seen, and only the multitude of starry spots in the sky lit up the silent darkness. This ship was moving forward at a very fast speed, but the stars outside the window weren't moving at all. It was like being locked in a still darkness.

The girl recalled how she would ask her maidservant, Lamias, the reason for this phenomenon, as she didn't understand it herself. The ever-patient Lamias would give a beaming smile and say: "Princess, that's because the stars are too far away, so they don't see us moving."

That was the excuse the adults gave, but it wasn't without merit. The 17-year-old girl knew this. Lamias was a good maidservant, but she had already been dead for almost ten years now. The girl's youth was shrouded in mystery, and she who was called a princess remained in her memories. But for the moment, the past she bore had to be forgotten for a while.

Because she had forgotten her past, she didn't need a name right now.

She stowed herself aboard this ship because she was just a nameless person who was going to where she should be going, to meet the person she should be meeting. That was all.

<Scatter the Minovsky particles, ASAP! Get them to combat levels!>

<One enemy ship. Most likely a Clop-class battleship.>

“That's no ordinary patrol. It was waiting in ambush in this area. There will be enemy mobile suits attacking. Don't let your guard down.”

The crew was scattering Minovsky particles, which could disrupt electromagnetic waves and jam electronics like radar, around the ship, but it was still possible to communicate with internal ship-wide communications. As the ship rang with the people's voices and the sounds of operation, the girl heard the low grunt of the ship’s captain, Suberoa Zinnerman, over the intercom and looked at the darkness outside the window.

As she looked, she saw a pink light fly past the window. It was the glow of a mega-particle cannon beam. The glowing, high-energy beam weapons were due to the development of Minovsky physics. The Earth Federation was shooting at this ship to capture it. This ship ignored the command to stop and continued to spray Minovsky particles around itself as it accelerated away. The next shot wouldn't be a warning shot. The enemy should have realized by now that a civilian ship couldn't be this fast.

The concentrated mega-particles were moving at very close to light speed, and would immediately pierce through the ship's armor if it was a direct hit. Even if it only grazed the hull, the high temperature of the particles themselves might melt a hole in the wall. The girl kicked herself off from the wall of the dim cabin, and moved over to the cupboard in the corner of the room. The cupboard was designated as storage, and its contents were fastened down due to the zero gravity environment. Inside were the three days worth of food and water she had smuggled in, and a spacesuit.

The girl pulled everything out of the cupboard, and used the resulting inertia to push her body about, using zero gravity to put on the spacesuit with minimal hassle. This cabin was hardly used, so the crew used it as a storeroom. If the ship was damaged, the life support system in this part of the ship would be one of the first systems to be cut off. In the likely situation of a vacuum, the supplies that were fastened to the wall or the floor would be frozen. The girl didn't want to think of the worst case scenario, where she would be sent flying out of the ship, and put on her space suit's large helmet.

<Two enemy ships approaching fast, firing high-energy particle beams! >

<There's a mobile suit!>

<It's on a Geta. Estimated time of contact: T-minus 320.>

<They'll catch us before we enter the debris field. Alright, hurry up and send Marida out. Let her chase the flies away.>

Though they all looked like members of a shipping crew, the people on the bridge all had combat experience and sounded very calm. Right now, they would be in spacesuits, moving to the bridge, which would be filled with flashing red lights. The girl remembered the that bridge was as cramped as the cockpit in a plane; she remembered the thoroughly moustached face of Zinnerman as he sat on the captain's seat; and she wondered whether she should tell him that she was here. If a battle began, it would be best for her to be in the safe protected zone. If she was discovered as a stowaway, she would definitely be sent there anyway. If she died here without being found, it would really be a futile death.

No, she couldn't. If he knew that she was on board as a stowaway, Zinnerman may change the ship's projected course and go back to the *Palau*. Even if he didn't, she would be locked up and watched closely. She wouldn't be able to achieve her goal, she wouldn't be able to got out, and she wouldn't be able to meet the person she had to meet. This outcome would cause the deaths of even more people.

This was the only chance, the girl told to herself. She knew this was a reckless act, but there was no other way. This was to prevent Earth from being covered in battle and causing hundreds of thousands of deaths. She could only do that...

<The Kshatriya is ready for launch.>

<Target the enemy Mobile Suits. Ignore the mothership.
The *Garencieres* is fast enough to shake them off.>

Zinnerman's deep, coarse voice could be heard of the intercom, and a clear female voice could be heard responding <Understood>. The girl remembered the face of the solitary woman, Marida Cruz, who should be of the same age as she was, and looked outside the window. She saw the silver form of the battlefield, and numerous scale powder-like things glittered around the ship. The shutter suddenly appeared and covered the windows as the ship The *Garencieres*' was entering battle mode, and all the windows had their protective shutters on.

The only image screen was on the inside of the bridge window, and the protective shutter on the inside of the cabin windows didn't have such a convenient function. The girl left the wall and hid her body in the gap between some boxes. Under the light of a weak standing lamp, she used the tape that she had included in her supplies to tie her hands together, and focused her attention on the wireless communicator inside her helmet.

She would die when she would, looking outside to scare herself wouldn't do anything to change that. She might as well gather as much information as possible to deal with the current situation. She calmly and clearly told this to herself as she tucked her knees in and hugged herself in the spacesuit.

Suddenly, she felt a chill. It was a chill that the life support of the spacesuit couldn't adjust, a chill that entered deep inside her heart. As she had often gotten involved with the battlefield when she was young, her body was already numb to the fear of it, and this chill seemed to be the price. The girl let herself be the instrument of silence as she closed her eyes and waited for the chill to fade.

Part 2[edit]

The transport ship *Garencieres* was 112 meters in length, and it was cone-shaped. Its maximum weight capacity was over 500 tons. The bridge was at the front of the ship, which was shaped like the nose of an old airplane. The shape made it look like the designer factored in air resistance, and one could tell that the ship could fly in an atmosphere, and could be used as a transport between Earth and space. It was a model commonly used by shipping companies in the past, but it was hardly seen anymore.

The words "Ribakoona Trading" on the side indicated the *Garencieres* was registered as a civilian transport ship, but that wasn't the whole truth. Right now, the large door on the back of the cone-shaped ship was opening, and the sliding cargo crane was emerging. Instead of carrying cargo though, the crane was carrying a giant, human-shaped robot.

The robot had four limbs that were somewhat thick at the end, and a bulge at the top of the waist that had a beak-shaped piece of armor. The head had a something like a large crest poking out, as well as a single eye-like laser sensor. The almost 20 meter tall humanoid frame had four shoulder-mounted wing-like pods, each one about as tall as the main body. This dark green machine should, by all rights, be called a giant, and the shape was far from a normal human's. However, its humanoid appearance was far too defined to be called anything but a

giant. In this age of mobile suits, giant human-shaped weapons that had the power of a battleship's main cannon, this machine's profile was somewhat strange. However, like most mobile suits, it had a ball-shaped cockpit in its abdomen, covered in many layers of armor. The figure of the mobile suit's pilot was already wearing a space suit, sitting in the cockpit, starting the machine.

"Target acquired. There's a Jegan that's somewhat fast, possibly a commander type."

Marida Cruz looked through the full screen display on the inside wall of the cockpit, and a small window showed the details of the enemy mobile suit.

<This means it's not a coincidence that we met, doesn't it?>, she asked emotionlessly

<We'll be entering the debris field soon. Hurry up and finish it off before coming back.> Captain Zinnerman responded through the wireless communicator.

<Understood, master.>

Marida heard Zinnerman breathe in a more tense manner than before, then came the usual words <Don't call me master>. The reason it was odd that they would meet a Federation ship here was that it was rare for them to patrol this area of space. However, it was really abnormal to stop a trading ship on its designated course and ask for an inspection. They had even sent out specially equipped mobile suits.

<This may be because the Federation Army already knew our true identity and objective and set an ambush in the debris field>. Zinnerman had to deduce who leaked the information about his ship, and wondered what he should do next.

"That's right," thought Marida, "The next step…. Master doesn't need to be bothered about this. This is why I exist." Ignoring all other thoughts, Marida put her hands on the control sticks—the hemisphere Arm Raker that allowed all 5 fingers to be gripped together.

"Marida Cruz, Kshatriya, launching."

As the restraints on the machine were released, the abnormally-shaped mobile suit, Kshatriya, slowly descended from the hangar. It wasn't really accurate to call it "descending", since there was no concept of up or down in outer space, but the machine had the feeling of being dangled as it was released from the hangar at the bottom of the ship. Marida released the activation control thrusters and moved

under the *Garencieres*, until she was more than 100 meters from the ship, and stepped on the pedal. The four main thrusters on the wing-like pods let out white light all at once. The Kshatriya left behind the inertial motion of the of the *Garencieres*, spun and approached from behind its target.

In the ball-shaped cockpit was one and a half meters across, and the screen of displayed a full 360 degrees of scenery. The intense rays of the stars hit Marida's eyes, and a bystander would feel that Marida's cockpit was suddenly floating in the midst of the stars, and that she was flying through them. However, the image of outer space that was shown around her wasn't a real scene, but a computer-generated image of outer space that used images of constellations to aid positioning.

One part of the screen showed an enlarged image of three targets. The optical sensor couldn’t capture very much at such a large distance, so it was a rough image. But in contrast, the model number of the targets, RGM-89, was rather clear. It was the mainstream mobile suits of the Earth Federation, the Jegan. The one leading the attack was a special type that had an S-shape extending from its back. The mobile suits abandoned their Geta as they scattered and closed in. Geta was the common name for mobile suits flight packs, used for long range attacks, acting as a flat bed to transport the mobile suits and send them into battle without wasting the mobile suit’s fuel. In short, it was something like a miniature boat for mobile suits. Marida didn't know why they were called Geta.

The three mobile suits were each wielding their main weapon, a beam rifle, as they closed in on Marida. She sensed that the enemies wanted to surround her from three directions outside her weapon’s range, and decided that this battle would be difficult. It wasn't that hard to take down three Jegan, but missing one would open a hole in the defenses of the *Garencieres*. Rather than being confident or bold in this situation, Marida merely used her head to think of the best way to handle the situation, and let her mobile suit decelerate suddenly.

The four pods swung forward, and the main thrusters on the tips spurt flames ahead of the Kshatirya, causing the suit's speed to immediately drop from meters per second to meters per minute and finally, nothing at all. As her back bore the sudden force of slowing down, Marida endured the discomfort of her eyeballs feeling like they was going to fly out of her skull, and her fingers swelling as the blood flowed into them. Then she muttered, “Funnels”.

Numerous exhaust lights on the inside of the four wing pods lit up as a

pair of two-meter long objects came from each of them, totalling eight of these small things things altogether. They moved normally, and as they hovered around the Kshatriya, their thrusters activated and they rushed to their targets like a bullet.

The sensor cannons were shaped like their name, funnels. The conical objects gathered and dispersed, striking the Jegans that were still outside the Kshatriya’s shooting range. This pattern wasn't automatic, nor was it mechanical long-range control. In a battlefield saturated with Minovsky particles, it was impossible to use electromagnetic waves to control anything, and it was impossible to use a computer to launch an attack on one spot. This weapon, the funnel, was controlled by the pilot's brainwaves.

The Psycho communicator, commonly know as psycommu, was a brainwave guiding system that recorded the brain signals of the pilot, magnified them and sent them as instructions to the funnel units. These brainwaves were also called psycho waves, and they didn’t cause the Minovsky particles to react. Thus, the psycommu didn't run the risk of interference like normal electromagnetic wave

transmissions. As long as the pilot could control them, the funnels could be thought of as completely invincible in the modern battlefield, as Minovsky particles would prevent all electronic devices from working. And as it was required to use a large mobile suit like the Kshatriya to protect the pilot and engage in close range combat on the battlefield, the funnels truly became a necessary piece of equipment.

Of course, not everyone could use this system. Even through many improvements, the psycommu system still caused a lot of physical and mental stress on the pilot. However, Marida could operate it better than anyone. More accurately, she had been created to be able to operate the funnels.

The funnels continued to spin as they attacked the two Jegan behind Marida. Due to their size, the funnels weren't much larger than space junk. It would be hard to detect them, even with visual sensors. The funnels quickly fired their control thrusters and gradually pinned the Jegans down before shooting out lasers. The Mega-particle energy beams glowed pink and fired completely through the Jegans that hadn't detected the enemy approaching at all. The funnels were only equipped with a small rechargeable battery, and so the intensity of their laser was low, and didn't have much energy. However, they did have the power to shoot through a mobile suit's armor. The Jegan pilots panicked and started firing beam shots randomly, trying to hit their invisible attackers. However, the funnels continued to destroy the Jegans bit by bit. Electrical transfer fluids continued to shoot out from damaged critical areas like blood, and the Jegans, smaller than the green Kshatriya, were painfully struggling. By this point, the funnels were like a flock of sharks hunting down a whale as they lunged forward to attack.

One, two. Without checking for the lights of explosions, Marida sensed that the two Jegans had already been blown to bits and concentrated on the remaining special unit. Though its backups were already destroyed, the unit didn't slow down at all as it continued to close the distance between itself and the Kshatriya. Marida decided that there was no need to let out new funnels and again pushed the Kshatriya forward.

The psycommu showed an image of the specially equipped unit that was more like a human, with added armor and thrusters. Before it entered the Kshatriya's range, the recoilless rocket launcher the Jegan was wielding let out a flash, and a physical shell with a diameter of 380 millimeters came flying at the Kshatriya. This high-powered shot was a normal size for a mobile suit's recoilless rifle, and though it had the disadvantage of being small, the destructive power it contained was be

larger than that of a beam weapon. Right now, it was in shotgun mode, and as it exploded, hundreds of metallic balls scattered around the Kshatriya. However, Marida had expected this, and dodged with the smallest of movements. The pilot of the specially-equipped mobile suit seemed to have also expected it to be dodged and used the scattered pellets as a smokescreen, firing his thrusters and getting above the Kshatriya.

With this, the battle became a typical mobile suit battle, as was commonly seen in this era, as if to prove why humanoid weapons were so valued. The specially equipped Jegan's missile launcher again fired another shell, and let out the missiles that were mounted on the shoulders. The Khastriya activated its main thruster to move up and grazed past the missiles as they passed. She then deployed the four wing-pods horizontally, spun the mobile suit 90 degrees, and flew forward. The Kshatriya slipped through the Jegan's trajectory, and into the dark outer space to get the initiative.

Normally, only thruster exhaust is needed to change directions in the vacuum of outer space. However, mobile suits had another system called the Active Mass Balance Control, or AMBAC system. Though there's no gravity in outer space to cause weight, objects still have all their mass, and a one Newton push would require one Newton of force; the force required would be equivalent to the force exerted. The main principal behind the AMBAC system is Newton’s third law of motion: for every action, there is an equal but opposite reaction. Simply put, the system could control any of a mobile suit's limbs, and use the “equal but opposite reaction” to change the direction the mobile suit faces. This was the one of the main reasons why mobile suits were the strongest weapons of the era, standing head and shoulders above any other.

The Kshatriya skilfully used its four thick limbs and four wing-pods to maneuver as it closed in on the Jegan via a complicated trajectory. The two machines' thrusters were glowing, and these two humanoid robots gave every impression of dancing in outer space. The explosions of the bullets flashed on the screens of both suit's cockpits. Under cover of the explosions, Marida closed in on the enemy. The Kshatriya's pods opened like a blooming metallic flower, with the one shining eye in the middle. The metallic flower was covered with beam cannons, and it used the impact from the explosions to become the most savage and beautiful flower in outer space.

These images were all displayed on the cockpit screens in the Jegan. Both machines were within a few meters of each other, an extremely close distance in outer space, and could use their optical sensors to

look directly at one another. A battlefield saturated with Minovsky particles meant close-range combat, and thus it was common to see machines go in close for attacks. In situations like this, there was a need for a one-on-one battle, which was another reason mobile suits were designed as humanoids.

The moment before she crossed the Jegan's path, Marida switched from the firearms to the beam saber and aimed at the abdomen of the Jegan. The Ksatriya used its mechanical hand to grab the handle of the beam saber and draw it out from the wrist holster. Particles of light shot more than ten meters from the handle, and formed a blade that hacked through the Jegan's abdomen.

The Jegan seemed like it wanted to draw its own beam saber, but reacted too slowly. The beam saber that could cut through 30 centimeters of metal in a second, melted through the Jegan's abdomen, and a metallic sound struck Marida's mind through the suit.

<Damn you, Sleeves...!>

At the same time Marida heard the voice of the other pilot, whether through wireless signal, or a sense other than her hearing, she did not know. No matter how she heard the voice, though, things ended here. The beam saber slashed through the armor of the Jegan, going straight through the cockpit, immediately vaporizing the pilot, and slicing the entire machine in half. The nuclear reactor inside the Jegan didn't explode as the machine was hacked in half at the waist, and floated away. The burnt remains were still giving off sparks, and the remains of the machine floated past this enemy called the "Sleeve" and silently disappeared.

Marida watched silently as she stowed her beam saber. The wrist of the Kshatriya had a place to keep a beam saber, and was adorned with a crest that looked like a wing—something that looked like a sleeved decoration. The mobile suits of the organization Marida belonged to all had such a design, which was why the Federation called them "Sleeves", but that wasn't important to Marida at all.

No, it wasn't just the nickname that wasn't important. Even the ideal of being an Anti-Earth Federation organization or the content of this mission weren't important. Humans were animals that could think and had curiosity, but Marida felt that this definition wasn't suited for her.

Just like how a man was born a man and a woman was born a woman, Marida Cruz was born a pilot, and lived as a pilot. To follow her master's orders and destroy the enemy mobile suits was her only desire. Perhaps the *Garencieres* should enter the debris field before

the enemy mothership arrived. Right now, though, Marida had to return to her ship as soon as possible, do a damage inspection on the Kshatriya, readjust and resupply. Once she was done, she would prepare for the next launch and get as much rest as possible. She wouldn't do anything else, and wouldn't think of anything else. Marida didn't feel this was in any way unnatural, and she didn't feel sad about it either.

However, once the battle ended, as she relaxed from her tense state after having concentrated for so long, her empty soul would feel some pain. The emotions she suppressed in the battlefield would awaken, and her mind would complain about the unhappiness. As the fire of the funnels destroyed the enemy machines, it felt as if the psycommu system were working in reverse, as she felt really complicated, uneasy about the dying scrams of the pilots that entered her mind. When she sliced the specially-equipped mobile suit, it felt as if she had personally sliced a pilot to death, and the final cringe before he died would cause an uneasiness in both her mind and soul. After recalling the funnels, Marida switched back to full screen view to let the cockpit screens show outer space.

Marida reached up, took off the helmet of her spacesuit, and loosened the hair that was tied behind her head. The straight, waist-length hair was pushed aside, and the hair of a healthy 18-year-old should have floated infront of her eyes, but Marida was instead staring at the starry sky.

The cockpit screens of a mobile suit wouldn't show outer space as it actually appeared if there wasn’t some specific reason. It wasn’t just because it was hard to accurately capture and display, but also because the risk of the pilot panicking was too great. The reality of outer space was so dark, grim and filled with emptiness that it seemed as if it would swallow all existence. However, Marida liked the view to be this way.

During the short time she had before she returned to the ship, Marida took off her helmet and relaxed her entire body as she remained in the vacuum of vast emptiness. This let her feel as if the uneasiness inside her would be washed away. Each star would perform a music she had never heard before, bringing her to another place. To an outer space that didn't have war or unhappiness, that people didn't need space suits to explore.

Of course, such a place didn't exist. Outside this cockpit was an outer space of vacuum deadly to humans, and a reality filled with problems —the human social circle known as the Earth's boundary. Marida

adjusted the main camera of the Kshatriya and looked at Earth, far away enough that it was only the size of a tennis ball.

Like many space migrants, she had never stepped onto Earth even once. Marida knew by the object floating in front of the blue body of the Earth that the *Garencieres'* target was near. Floating in one of the Lagrange points between Earth and the Moon was the rubble of the past war; this debris field was home to numerous destroyed space colonies and spaceships.

Humanity had created space colony settlements, known as Sides, in the five Lagrange points around Earth and the Moon, and most of humanity had been living in outer space for almost 100 years by now. The wounds of this grand-scale war ran deep, and the debris field was one of them. The place people used to call Side 5 was no longer there, and what remained was a floating graveyard of countless frozen remains. The final destination of Marida and the rest, the colony known as 'Industrial 7', should be located somewhere deep inside this graveyard.

Right now, though, it was impossible to find the colony in the large amount of rubble, but she did find the *Garencieres* which began to move towards her. Marida again checked to see if there were any pursuers behind her before pushing the Kshatriya on. The nuclear rocket engine sounded through the machine as it jerked, and the force of acceleration pressed on her uneasy body. The helmet that was floating in the cockpit hit the rear screen and let out a light thud.

Part 3[edit]

The moment the vibration of the alarm clock woke him, Banagher Links thought *"I am so out of it today."*

As he turned the alarm off, he saw the time was 4:20 AM. After confirming the time, he stealthily got out of bed. It was still pitch black outside. He could barely see the contents two-man dorm room: the beds, desks, or dressers that were still covered in darkness. The only sounds Banagher could hear were the clock ticking away the seconds, and his roommate Takuya Irei snoring away on the other bed.

It was, of course, impossible for a room inhabited by two stinky guys to be anything resembling clean, as there would always be things like discarded clothing and empty food containers. However, there was still some order in the mess, and Banagher was able to grab his shirt and jeans without turning on the lights, and tiptoed his way to the bathroom. He quickly combed and washed himself, then looked at himself in the mirror above the sink.

He had dark brown eyes and the skin color of someone with Middle Eastern blood. His long hair was the same color as his eyes, and it was rather smooth even if he didn't take care of it. Upon seeing that his 16-year-old boyish face was completely ordinary and nothing special, a disjointed feeling rose up in him. However, this feeling only persisted until he put on his coat.

It was the official jacket of the Anaheim Electronics Industrial College. The logo of the parent company, Anaheim Electronics, was sewn on the left side of the blue, fireproof materials. This jacket wasn't fashionable enough that it could be worn outside shop classes, but Banagher had modified the extra one he bought and used it as casual wear. The main modification was on the collar; the crest of the Anaheim Electronics Industrial College, AEIC, looked like it had been removed. Of course, Banagher hadn't removed it himself, rather a second-hand shop he was familiar with did the job for him.

Banagher finished putting on his clothing to help suppress the disjointed feeling. What replaced it was the realism of him being part of the large enterprise of Anaheim Electronics. Once he slapped his face to help keep himself awake, Banagher left the bathroom, checked that his roommate was still deep in dreamland, and began to move silently towards the room's exit. On the way, however, he tripped over an object roughly the size of a basketball laying on the floor.

<Hello, Banagher. Hello, Banagher.>

The two circular disks on the ball-shaped body flapped out like ears as the impact from the kick activated the Haro unit, and made it speak in a loud, but monotonous voice. Banagher frantically tried to hold down the Haro as it moved around the floor. He soflty growled "Quiet, Haro!" But it was too late. Takuya, who had had the pillow covering his head, wriggled around his bed, and the moment his eyes met Banagher's, he sat up.

"Damn it, Banagher!" Takuya roared out, "You don't care about our agreement at all do you? We aren't supposed to sneak out!"

His tea-colored hair was all messy, and he was so angry he had even forgotten to wipe away the drool from his mouth. Though the impression his roommate usually gave was something like an affectionate big brother, his popularity with the ladies would likely drop were they to see him like this. However, Banagher didn't have time to think about popularity, and as he carried Haro out of the apartment, he asked: "Didn't you set your clock five minutes fast, Takuya?" Banagher put Haro on the floor, and grabbed the sandwich he had bought yesterday. Haro was jumping energetically like a self-propelled ball,

out through the automatic door that led to the hallway.

Banagher ran through the school campus that was linked to the dorm, down the stairs that linked the school atrium and the road, and arrived at an electric car station. The stations were managed by computers, and would automatically send vehicles to locations with the highest frequency of use. Anyone with an ID card could use them. Banagher took a bite from his sandwich as he got into the open, two-seat electric car. He inserted his ID card to into a slot on the dashboard, pressed the start button, grabbed the steering wheel, and stepped on the accelerator.

<Very improper, Banagher.>

Perhaps because Banagher was holding the steering wheel with the only one hand, the other held his sandwich, Haro had spoken up, flashing its optical sensors at the same time. Haro had a first-level artificial intelligence in its ball-shaped body and was supposed to be a toy robot marketed toward children. This normally wouldn't be something belonging to a vocational student in the equivalent of high school, but Banagher had modified it, and carried it around like a pet.

The streets were quiet before dawn. Banagher swallowed the last of his sandwich and looked up through the windshield at the sky. Through the clouds scattered in the night sky, he could see numerous lights flickering. They looked like stars, but they weren't. Those flickering lights were the lights from the windows of shops, factories, and skyscraper windows that stayed open throughout the night. It was the city lights that just so happened to be above Banagher. The carpet of lights was about 6000 meters above, and covered the entire sky in a gradual arc. In the gap between skyscrapers in front of him, Banagher could see the lights climb to the sky ahead of him. If anyone in those lights above were to look at the sky, the headlights of the electric car and the surrounding street lights would look like stars to them.

The artificial ground within the large cylinder of the space colony was covered with houses, office buildings, parks, and other important things that made up everyday society. The internal structure of almost all space colonies were like this. The cylinder that was 6.4 kilometers across would spin at a definite speed, creating a centrifugal force on the inside of the walls, creating artificial gravity equivalent to gravity on Earth. The constructed ground on the inside of the cylinder were on large areas 3.2 kilometers long and 1.6 kilometers wide. Big enough that from the inside the ground wouldn't look like it curved with the wall of the colony. At most, the joints where the plates met would look a little slanted.

Day and night inside the space colony were created via the mirrors outside the cylinder itself, or by an artificial sun at the center, which also helped in adjusting the temperature and replicating the seasons. The time was set to Greenwich Mean Time, and the climate was set to emulate the Northern Hemisphere. Unless there were special issues for tourism, these basic settings were used for every space colonies. Thus, right now, on the 7th of April, at 4:30 AM, the residential area itself was neither too hot, nor too cold, and most of the colonies were still in middle of night. The billions of residents of those colonies were, just like the residents of this one, 'Industrial 7', were also waiting in the night for spring.

Banagher was one of those billions of people, and had been getting up before daylight for a while now, in order to get to the space dock to work. The work involved clearing junk away from the outside of space colonies. It was tough getting up early in the morning, but it wasn't that bad, since Banagher could easily sleep through the general education periods in school. It was worth more to work three hours before lessons though, since three hours of the morning shift payed more than working five hours after school on the evening shift did.

Takuya worked at the same place as Banagher; the first one to clock in got a mini mobile suit that was better-suited for the kind of work they did, and their wages would increase based on their job performance. Thus, the two of them would race to see who would get out first. Though underhanded methods were considered poor form, everything else was fair game. So Banagher and Takuya were always thinking of ways to sneak out of their dorm without waking the other one. Right now, the chances of winning were about 50/50.

All that being said though, the two of them were still doing well in their studies. They were attending a vocational school where it was required for them to stay in the dorm, and their clothing and food were provided for them. The most they needed was some spending money. *"This is just a game,"* Banagher thought.

"A game to shake off my roommate and getting a high capability mini mobile suit. A game to shake off studies, using work to get rid of boredom. Everyone else is the same. Enjoying the game of student's relaxation and not facing that disjointedness…

<Working all the time. Study some more.>

Babagher had no idea how Haro reached this realization that struck through him. "This is seperate from studying!" Banagher answered back, feeling that the robot had a very good read on him, "The vocational students here will all become employees of Anaheim. It's

not like it's a bad thing to test out this mini mobile suit first."

On the one hand, he wondered how he ended up making this kind of excuse, but on the other hand, he felt really satisfied by it. Banagher again felt that 'disjointed' feeling. This was a future he wouldn't have even dared dream of a year ago, and as he looked forward to the twelve wonderful years ahead of him, he felt as if he were just drifting with the flow, and yet feeling a bit bad for walking on the path others had set in stone. However, there wasn't anything else he really wanted to do. He would maintain his grades in the middle-high tier, party with others, and feel extremely out of place. The psychological reason behind this disjointed feeling had started when Banagher was very young, and had now became a bad habit.

The electric car moved through the colony's residential area and into a heavy-industry zone set between two light-industrial areas. Banagher parked the electric car at a parking station near a convenience store and walked down to the nearby subway station. Thinking that Takuya might catch up to him if he kept letting himself get distracted, he left his stupid problems behind as his feet naturally quickened through the silent street.

Industrial 7 was one of the industrial space colonies Anaheim Electronics operated. Under the control of the Space Colonies Association, the management of facilities was completely controlled by Anaheim Electronics. Amongst the population of two million, more than half of them worked for Anaheim Electronics, or was directly related to someone who did. Of the remaining one million, half of them worked in enterprises related to Anaheim, or in underground companies, and those who were unrelated to Anaheim were mostly civil servants working with government administration, the police, or the fire department. The colony didn't belong to any Side, and it didn't have any form of self-government, so the Federation Army didn't maintain a military presence. This space colony was basically Anaheim Electronics' personal island.

After the One Year War, Anaheim Electronics began to recover and absorbed other, smaller companies, eventually becoming a large corporation that many people called the 'Spoon of the Space Army'. The company grew so large, that supermarkets, fast food chains, and most other companies in any given commercial district would all bear the logo of Anaheim Electronics. There were movies sponsored by Anaheim Electronics, sports teams sponsored by Anaheim in away games, and people using AE credit cards to pay for all of these. Money would flow around within the corporation, forming a structure where the

money was paid out, then taken back. However, none of it was ever forced, and it was all done such that the residents wouldn't notice anything. This was the reason why Anaheim Electronics had become the world's largest corporation. Banagher glanced at the posters outside the station, 80% of which were somehow related to the corporation, went through the turnstile, and onto the platform.

The whole of Industrial 7 was just like a factory. At all times there were people working. However, there was no real shift change, such as during morning peak hours. Therefore, on the subway, there was only a drunk, middle-aged man who had collapsed in his work clothes, and a woman who looked as if she worked in a night club, and whose thick make-up was coming off. She didn't notice Banagher get on the train as she looked emotionlessly out the window. The smell of old perfume inside the train car reminded one of the smell of a hometown long ago given up on. Banagher saw a double-wide seat and quickly sat down.

The three layers of doors closed, and the train jerked slightly before moving from the platform into the tunnels leading to the outside of the space colony. It was called the subway, but subways in the space colonies didn't run underground, but along rail tracks on the exposed outer walls of the space colony. In other words, the train was hanging on the tracks and transported outside the space colony—in outer space.

Soon after the train left the station, the air lock door at the end of the ramp was locked behind it. Then, the air lock door in front opened, and the train entered the vacuum of outer space. The sound of both movement and air-flow disappeared in the train, and an ear-stuffing silence filled the car. The train went through the air lock and glided across outer wall of the space colony.

As there was no air resistance, only a minimal amount of force was be required to move the train at high speed along the track. In a space colony, this was one of the most efficient modes of transport. It was the fastest way to get to the dock, faster than taking a cable car from the bottom of the colony, or even riding the elevator up in an electric car. Banagher also preferred to look at outer space from the train's window, so this place had a sense of release other places couldn't provide.

There were people who didn't want to take the train for fear of motion sickness, though. To create a centrifugal force of 1g, the space colony had to make one rotation about every two minutes, which worked out to a rotational speed of more than 600 kilometers per hour. If it were to follow the movement of the rotation, the subway train would appear to continually move, and to a passenger, it would look like someone

shaking the bottom of a toilet bowl full of stars at incredibly high speeds. Of course, as it was just a long rotation of more than 20 kilometers, it would merely look like the stars were constantly moving. However, if one weren't careful, the mind would feel dizzy upon returning to the inside of the space colony, and. In the worst cases, it would cause severe a psychological problem, called Coriolis Syndrome: a common environment illness amongst the first generation of space migrants. However, to Banagher ,who had been born and raised in the space colonies, looking out from the window into outer space was like looking at an exhibition, something that was merely a little different from everyday life. Once outside the space colony, Banagher could clearly see the in-progress construction of Industrial 7.

Industrial 7 orbited in the shoal space at L1, between the Moon and Earth. It was shaped like a large oxygen tank, and the end undergoing construction was facing Earth. On the other side, the side that faced the moon, there was a covered settlement-building tool commonly known as "Wheels". After construction was completed, the cylinder of the colony would be 30 kilometers long. Right now, though, only 18 kilometers were completed. In fact, Banagher remembered, there was a new plate arriving today.

The notice board at the dorm had a poster saying "On 7 April, at 1:00 PM, there will be a new plate extension which will cause inconvenience…" and so on. This meant that there would be new artificial land added. The cylinder of Industrial 7 would be extended by another six kilometers. The space colonies were floating amongst the large amount of rubbish from the last war. No matter how much it expanded, the world Banagher lived in would be that size.

As Banagher thought about this, as his mind thought of that "disjointedness", he saw something white flash past, outside the window.

It wasn't a star. It let out several exhaust lights of blueish-white, going past in a diagonal manner and flying faster than the rotation of the space colony. It was only for a moment, and was far enough away that it looked only about the size of a small fingertip, but Banagher was sure that the afterimage looked human.

"A mobile suit…?"

It was completely different from a mini mobile suit, like the one Banagher used for work. It was a real mobile suit. It wasn't just a complete duplicate of a human being's dimensions, though. as Banagher saw a single horn which extended from the head. Industrial 7 didn't have a factory that could create mobile suits, so it couldn't be a new mobile suit field test. Was the army nearby?

For some reason, Banagher's pulse started to race, and his palms began to sweat. The uncanny resemblance to a white horse—no, the impressive lone horn made it look not like a mere white horse, but like a mystical beast from legend. What was it called though...

At that moment, the "disjointed" world became apparent, and it

seemed that something previously unseen had appeared before Banagher. However, he could find no way to describe this. Banagher put his face to the window, eagerly looking for the white machine. The nightclub-styled woman sitting behind him wasn't moving, and the man in worker's clothing was still snoring loudly.

The train reached one end of the space colony ,and turned down a corner. The front end of the colony looked like a sealed, round pressure tube. The train moved through the seal, and to the docking bay in the center. Banagher couldn't find the white mobile suit and sat back. Outside the windshield, one could see the immense docking bay linking to several large buildings near the commercial area, and the sheer weight of the sight would make anyone gasp for breath. However, Banagher no longer cared about it. He merely felt the intense white afterimage in his eyes start to fade away, as his heart started to beat wildly for some reason.

This was how everything began.

Part 4[edit]

The white machine moved past the rotating space colony and headed off in the opposite direction from the docking bay, towards the Moon.

Similar to those of the other space colonies, the outer walls of Industrial 7 were of a blueish-silver color. However, at the 18 kilometer point, facing the moon, the color changed to a tea-brown color. This was because the space colony building tool, the Wheel, was set on the end of the moon's side.

The Wheel was 10 kilometers long and 6.4 kilometers across, just like a normal space colony. From a distance, it looked like an Eastern teacup, and the part that covered the space colony looked like a pencil case. Its job was to build the outer wall of the space colony, and the plate block on the inside of the wall. As the name "Wheel" would indicate, the space colony was created out from the large cover. Once the outer wall was built and aligned properly, the Wheel would slide back the appropriate distace before separating. The front end of the cover had a gate to move equipment, and a workers quarters. This meant that, even with the expansion work, the space colony could continue to operate without day-to-day life being affected.

Right now, Industrial 7 had the Wheel's equipment at the entrance, at the bottom of the "cup". This way, other machinery and equipment could be moved in through the large machine. The white mass went past the outer wall of the Wheel, and shortly reached the far end of moon side of the colony, and the large machine, the *Magallanica*, that

was attached to it.

The *Magallanica* was about 6,500 meters long, and the long, thin center exposed the rotational residential area that was 1.6 kilometers long. The machine's unique shape earned it the moniker of "Snail". Both sides of the of the rotating residential area had factories sticking out, looking like little asteroids that were absorbing resources. The seemingly-biological appearance matched the *Magallanica*'s nickname well. On the back of its main body, there was a nuclear pulse engine. Due to the fact that it could navigate on its own, it could be said to be a giant spacesuit. Due to its ability to create, refine, and even build space colonies, it would be more appropriate to call the *Magallanica* a mobile factory with an engine. In fact, the *Magallanica* was classified as a space colony builder, and its dimensions were very different from those of a spaceship.

At the area of the Magallanica that was the head of the snail shape, there was an oval-shaped command center. The white machine slowed down in front of it, made a flip with the AMBAC system, flew along the arc of the windows, and went up. Several unmanned cameras followed its path, taking shots of several of the machine's parts: the main thruster on the back of the machine, the overall image of straight and curved contours, and the complicated antenna that extended out from the forehead. These images were immediately analyzed and displayed on multiple screens in the command room, all in front of Cardeas Vist.

The dome-shaped command room was more than 70 meters across, and had a fan-shaped command system that gave the impression of the bridge of a docked ship combined with the control center of a military base. The inside walls of the dome-shaped space seemed to be filled with nothing but screens and windows. Displayed on the fan-shaped metal board in the middle was a control panel full of messages and switches. The *Magallanica* was a space colony builder meant to develop the area around Jupiter, and it was this opulent command room which bore the responsibility of a central brain. However, as it was now in Earth's vicinity, most of the control functions weren't used. Thus, only a fourth of the control seats were occupied, and the whole scene seemed somewhat relaxed.

However, every single one of the 20 control personnel looked rather serious. They were staring at the screens on the wall and recording the data there on the computers in their hands. The command room hummed with intensity, and it wasn't just because of the end of the overnight operation experiment. It was because they knew that the UC Project itself was about to end. Cardeas also felt this excitement as he

sat in the central seat of the command room.

The Earth Federation had requested Anaheim Electronics to secretly carry out the UC Project, and that project would end with the completion of this white mobile suit. However, that would also be the beginning of Cardeas' plan.

The product of this UC Project, the RX-0 "Unicorn" mobile suit, would be born out of the darkness, where even the army and Anaheim wouldn't see, and would become the key to a journey that would break a hundred-year-old curse. The machine that bore the name of the beast of possibilities would bring release to the world or—

"RX-0, you are too close to the space colony! The train is moving! What will happen if a passenger sees you?"

An operator, who also bore the secrecy of this job, roared into the microphone. Cardeas also felt nervous when he saw the Unicorn close in on the outer walls of the space colony, but a daring pilot was a reliable pilot.

"Today is his last time piloting the Unicorn," Cardeas said with a wry smile, "Forgive him."

"Yes, sir..." Even though he kept back his attitude, the operator still couldn't hide the emotions on his face as he looked at the screen. Even though he was a overly serious, he was still a good worker, and Cardeas' wry smile made this even more obvious. All the workers here, including the test pilots, were Anaheim Electronics employees involved in the UC Project. The Vist Foundation gave them a high salary in return for their silence and aid to fulfil Cardeas' plan. Of course, not a single one of them was the kind of person who could be bought over with money, and all of them were outstanding technicians who hoped for the Unicorn to be completed successfully.

Right now, the only person in the room who wasn't a member of Anaheim Electronics was probably Gael Chan, who was standing beside Cardeas. He was Cardeas' secretary and bodyguard. Gael, who, like Cardeas, had also been in the military, joked, "That's just what you'd expect an ex-pilot to say." He was in charge of maintaining the secrecy of this project, and now, he should be reviewing the security at the secret stronghold in *Magallanica*.

Gael had once been involved in an underground society, so he knew of the dealings within the army and the police. If there was a need for it, he would do a dirty job without hesitation. Gael had a bitter look on his face, which made Cardeas feel that he had something to say. He

whispered, “What is the matter?”

“We just made contact with our allies on Luna II,” Gael whispered back, “A Londo Bell ship engaged the Sleeves, lost three mobile suits, and let them get away.”

Londo Bell was an independent mobile squadron of the Earth Federation, and didn't have a designated control area. It was a brigade that dealt with things once there was something to deal with. The command system was obviously different from that of a normal squadron, so it was more like an external organization, than part of the army.

And Londo Bell set an ambush around the shoal space region and fought with the Sleeves. To Cardeas, who had something important to complete, he couldn't just leave this alone.

“So news was leaked. Has Londo Bell take any more action?”

“We've tried looking into news on Londenion, but there's nothing yet. The commander's a really upright person.”

“He's called Bright Noa, right? I saw him before on a television interview or something like that. Such a man...”

“RX-0 has passed its final phase. All objectives complete.” The voice of the operator rang out, and Cardeas looked back to the front.

“Good work. The mental response to the G-force is within expectations.”

“Pilot's lifesigns all all normal.”

The sounds of reports continued to echo through the room, and behind Cardeas, Gael went quiet and seemed to back away. "Has it arrived?" Cardeas asked as he rubbed his eyes, and looked at the screen to confirm that the white machine had already entered the planned return trajectory.

“Everyone, please swear this together with me,” Cardeas said into the microphone on the control panel, “The activation experiment of the RX-0 has successfully completed. Once it returns, we are going to remove the test OS, seal the NT-D, and activate the Laplace system.”

The air rumbled a little, and soon, the command room was filled with an urgent silence. As the workers floated in front of the screen in zero gravity, they were all grabbing their things and looking at the chairman with nervous expressions.

“I'm grateful to everyone for taking part in this. The UC Project will never see the light of day, your accomplishments here will not be passed down through the generations. However, I would like to guarantee to everyone that here, where history will be made, the Unicorn will play an important role. Before that day, however, I hope that everyone remains silent about this and forgets everything you have heard here. The Vist Foundation will use its name and influence to ensure all of your safety. That is all.”

The “safety” that had just been guaranteed meant that all the people here would be watched by the Foundation. All their relationships and communication records would be thoroughly examined. It was, after all, unknown just how much the workers knew. Gael indicated with his eyes for everyone to applaud, and after a slightly awkward applause, Cardeas put down the microphone.

Now, all the preparations were complete. The Unicorn would be sealed and handed to the recipient. If the recipient had the necessary element within themselves, the Unicorn would approach them, carry them, and lead them to Laplace’s Box.

After that, it was impossible to predict what would happen. If the recipient didn't have the needed element, the seal of the Unicorn will not be broken—no, there was a bigger problem. There was no proof to indicate a person with the necessary qualities even existed. No matter how much he planned, there was no guarantee that the plan would work. Cardeas' conclusion, therefore, was not to think about it. He turned around and looked at Gael.

“Proceed according to plan,” Cardeas said, “Continue to track Londo Bell's movements. If we can't track the commander, we can still know where the fleets are going if we follow their supply lines.”

“Understood... but, aren't you going to reconsider?”

Grabbing onto the handle of the chair, Gael lowered his upper body and whispered to Cardeas. Cardeas looked at Gael's face.

“They not related to the Federation, but the Sleeves are still a dangerous organization. There's no need for the head of the Vist Foundation to personally meet them.”

On seeing Gael's expression, which was practically screaming “Think about your age!”, Cardeas couldn't help but grimace inwardly. Even if this wasn't something directly related to the Foundation, Cardeas didn't want to hand it over to other people. After all, if there was really someone who fit the plan’s requirements, Cardeas wanted to see what

kind of person they were.

“If you really think that, then just do your work properly and safely, and try to prevent trouble here in Industrial 7,” Cardeas said in a half-joking manner, “Besides, I'm the chairman of a school here.”

As he spoke, he used the computer beside him to open the introductory page of Anaheim Electronics Industrial College. Gael didn't smile as he used his eyes to ask “Is this really alright?”, but left the command room quietly. On seeing Gaelfloat down the corridor, Cardeas looked back at the screen displaying the logo of Anaheim Electronics and a photo of the school.

After keying in the password that indicated he was the chairman, Cardeas looked through the list of student names. A list that was never to be released to the public. As Cardeas scrolled through the alphabetical list of five thousand students, he stopped a certain photo on the screen, and then sighed in what seemed a habitual manner.

Now that he thought about it, he really shouldn't be using this place to make deals. However, there was no better place to hide from the eyes of both the client and the developer, and there was no better place to install the Laplace System in the Unicorn. The industrial space colony builder *Magallanica*, jointly owned by Vist Foundation and Anaheim Electronics, symbolized a good inseparable location that could fool the army and Anaheim. A secret garden to readjust the Unicorn. Cardeas silently watched as the screen showed an enlarged profile of the student.

Banagher Links. Currently of the Technical Resource development branch. 16 years old. As Cardeas looked at the birthday and the listed personal particulars, he again sighed, and looked at the boyish face that seemed to represent his youth.

Part 5[edit]

The dock of a space colony was called a docking bay, mostly as a holdover from when space development was still under way. In that age, when humanity finally found a way to send space stations into low orbit above Earth, the ships that went to and fro were just docking with the space stations. The size of the stopping point wasn't large enough to be called a “bay”. There were also quite a few cases of space stations being linked to each other. Regardless of terminology though, the early space constructions were just relay platforms.

Right now, the docking bay at the front end of the space colony had seven space docks of different sizes inside its cylindrical shell, and a

spaceship at the dock would merely be stopped in zero gravity, waiting for the immigration check and other bureaucratic procedures. The zero gravity industrial area of Industrial 7 was linked to the docking bay, so there was a ring-shaped construct that reached out from the space colony. Including the cylindrical docking bay, the entire assembly was over 3.5 kilometers long. All of the factories in the colony had a dock for transport ships to dock, so there weren't just ten or twenty ships that came in and went. There were so many of them it was like fireflies surrounding a high pressure bottle.

4:15 AM. The *Garencieres* became one of those fireflies as it gradually approached the brand-new docking bay of Industrial 7. The space colony was only half complete and still new, and the platform showed a dim glow. Even more eye-catching, though, was the light reflected from the solar panels. The four rows of five kilometer-long rectangular solar panels were aligned beside the space colony, and their main surface was always facing the sun. The electricity obtained from the solar panels was sent to the space colony via microwaves. To the isolated environment of the space colony of Industrial 7, this was a must.

Of course, it was very easy to get electromagnetic interference when the electricity was being transferred, so the solar panel wouldn't be in a path where ships docked. Despite that, the *Garencieres* grazed by the solar panels and reduced its velocity relative to Industrial 7. As the ship past a piece of solar panel reflecting sunlight, the hatch opened, releasing a mobile suit from the hangar.

There was a dark green body and a single, glowing pink eye. This was an AMS-129 "Geara Zulu", the mobile suit that made up most of the Sleeves' fighting forces. It looked like a cross between a knight from the Middle Ages, and an early 20th Century soldier wearing a helmet and a gas mask. As it moved past the solar panel, the mobile suit dropped off the *Garencieres*, using the shield on its right shoulder to reflect sunlight, and soon began to let out bursts of thrust. Next to the large solar panel, the 20 meter-tall, human-shaped machine was like dust. Once it slipped through a gap behind the structure of the solar panel, it was as good as invisible.

Not even 10 seconds had passed from the time the Geara Zulu left the *Garencieres* until it disappeared behind the solar panel. Even though the ship's trajectory had been cleared, this region of space still had lots of debris around, and the space traffic control couldn't possibly notice a single ship's mysterious actions. Even if there were someone serious enough to take out a pair of binoculars and look, the light reflected off the solar panel would conceal everything. Marida Cruz looked back at the solar panel, then back at the ship's bridge.

Located on the left and right sides of the bridge were the helmsman's station, and the navigational station, respectively. In the back, and slightly elevated over the rest of the bridge, was the captain's seat. The bridge of the *Garencieres* was full with just those three things, and those who didn't have a position here couldn't stay for long without getting uncomfortable. However, since the ceiling still had a definite height, there weren't much problems when under zero gravity. In zero gravity, everyone on board could squeeze into the three-dimensional space the bridge provided.

"This will take a while," the captain, Suberoa Zinnerman, bellowed to the microphone, "But it'll be over before the day is out. Just bear with it."

The old captain's hat, brown leather coat, and rough stubble of moustache made him look like the stereotypical captain of an old trading ship. However, his eyes were sharp.

<Yes, Captain.>

The acknowledgment that came back through the wireless communicator couldn't hide its anxiety.

The one who responded was Savoir, the pilot of the Geara Zulu. He would be hidden under the solar panel for a whole day to watch the outside of Industrial 7. They hadn't let the enemy know about the deal, but since they had been ambushed by the Federation, they couldn't trust in the kind intentions of the other party. If they were closely inspected once they entered the dock, Savoir's Geara Zulu would wreck havoc.

If that were the case, not only would Marida sortie in her Kshatriya, but the other Geara Zulu would launch too, piloted by Gilboa Sant. Right now, he was in the navigation seat, busily explaining to the control officer why they were slightly off course. Gilboa was 30 years old, with a friendly and approachable face. He had pure black skin that was rare to see nowadays, and was the father of three children. In the helmsman's seat on the other side of the bridge was the 27 year old Flaste Schole. Compared to Gilboa, Flaste gave off a cold and aloof vibe. Though he looked rather unapproachable, he was really a good big brother-type who took care of others. All the other members of the crew trusted him. He was a long-time acquaintance of Zinnerman, and the number two man on board, supporting the captain from behind.

The entire compliment of the *Garencieres* was 33 people, including the mobile suit team and the crew of the ship itself. Amongst the Sleeves which the Earth Federation had declared "Terrorists who appear from

nowhere, then disappear", they could be said to be a specialized unit. With Captain Zinnerman leading them, the entire crew were disguised as members of a trading ship, so they weren't as rigidly structured as a military organization. The main forces of the Sleeves seemed to view them as radicals too, so it was like Zinnerman was leading an independent group, or an underground organization carrying out a mission. In fact, they had received this mission precisely because of this nature. Because of the recent ambush by the Federation Navy, however, the ship had an atmosphere of not quite knowing how to deal with this mission.

They were headed to Industrial 7 to collect Laplace's Box, which the Vist Foundation claimed it would provide. At first glance, this was a mission that anyone could do. A mission that even a delivery company could do. The only strange thing about the whole affair was that no one knew what Laplace's Box actually was.

"We've bypassed the inspection completely," Gilboa said worriedly once he had ended the conversation with the traffic control officer, "It seems that the Harbor Authority was notified too, so we can dock without an investigation…. I don't understand."

Marida looked over at him, and through the window in front of him she could see the guiding lights leading to a thumb-sized space gate.

"The thing we're after is in the port on the other side of the colony, right?" Gilboa asked, "Why won't they let us go there? Since it's connected to the colony builder, wouldn't it be easier to carry out the deal if we weren't allowed into the colony itself?"

"That colony builder is said to be Vist Foundation property," Flaste responded, "Odds are, they don't want us getting too close."

Industrial 7 had only opened the port on the Earth side of the colony, and the port on the moon side was covered by the colony builder. The builder itself was a large installation that could purify and use the space dust in the debris field to make parts for new space colonies. Not just the the employees of the builder, but even the people living inside the space colony were said have their movements restricted. While it was no one knew whether the Laplace's Box of rumor was real, this colony builder was still a good place to carry out a secret deal. However, for some reason, the Vist Foundation wouldn't let them go directly to the colony builder.

"They're being cautious", said Zinnerman as he drank from a can of coffee, "We are the dreaded, illegal Sleeves after all."

Zinnerman's self-moking tone washed away the doubts of his subordinates and reminded everyone that they were in danger. Despite that reminder, though, Flaste continued on, a rare feat for him.

"So, what is this "Laplace's Box" thing, anyway? You should probably tell us, right?"

That was the question that went straight to the core of the issue. Gilboa looked back at Zinnerman in the Captain's seat. Zinnerman shrugged.

"I don't know. Maybe it's some huge, shocking treasure."

"It's well-hidden, but the Vist Foundation is just one huge organization, and it's deepin bed with the government and Anaheim Electronics," said Gilboa, "The colony builder is their main base, right? Those guys who deal with the Federation government would actually offer us a treasure? I just don't understand what's going on here."

This was precisely what everyone on the *Garencieres* was thinking, but Zinnerman just continued to look aloof. He answered, “This is information we got from Full Frontal, so we can trust that it’s at least accurate.” He looked at Marida, who just so happened to look back at him.

"There is definitely something wrong with this situation, what with that ambush and all,” Zinnerman said, “Don’t let your guard down.”

Marida nodded at this warning, and looked out of the window. Luckily, the port official’s ship was closing in, and Flaste and Gilboa started speaking into the radio, and the conversation ended. Marida looked at the numerous lights and readouts, checking that everything was normal.

At this point, there were three things they knew. First, they would be provided with the Box for free, provided they followed the instructions of Vist Foundation. Second, the item was large, so it had to be transported via cargo ship. Because of this, they had only two Geara Zulu even though they could normally hold three. On the other hand, the fact that they only took one fewer mobile suit showed that Zinnerman was being cautious on this mission.

However, the most important point was the third one. This thing called Laplace’s Box had the ability to overturn the world—shake the Earth Federation to its core and radically alter the status quo—it could be some scandal in the current administration, or an ultimate weapon that could bring about an overwhelming military victory. It was important though, otherwise headquarters wouldn’t have agreed to the Vist Foundation’s invitation. Right now, the Sleeves were such that even if it was only a trace of hope, they had to grab it.

All that aside, no matter what was inside Laplace’s Box, Marida’s mission was to protect her master and follow his orders. That would never change. If the box really existed, they would bring it back. If it was a trap, she would break through it. No matter how much of a sacrifice she had to make, she wouldn’t hesitate in the slightest.

Marida looked out again at Industrial 7. The isolated space colony, and the secret locked inside it, was floating amidst the stone and metal debris. The *Garancieres* followed the guiding lights and entered the docking bay. As the ship was about to be assigned to a space gate, Marida saw numerous small objects flying past into outer space. She consciously checked the appearance and number of objects, checking to see if they were dangerous.

They were cylindrical objects, with short legs and arms for work, and

bubble-shaped canopies covering a pilot. These human-shaped machines were about as tall as two humans. Marida determined they were mobile suits used for short-range work around the port.

A total of eight mobile suits flew by, perhaps here to clean the runway, then, another dozen of the miniature mobile suits past the *Garancieres* . As he looked at the squad of three-meter-tall mobile suits, Gilboa said, “Those are Bubbo’s company machines.”

“Junk Collectors?”

“Yeah. Lots of space colonies opened up franchises. They probably came here because of Anaheim’s outsourcing project. It looked like good work, and thanks to the One Year War, there’s enough junk to last hundreds of years.”

Gilboa sounded somewhat heavy-hearted, perhaps feeling that he was in the middle of creating even more junk. Flaste didn’t respond to him, and Marida just looked at the mini mobile suits floating in vacuum.

As they let out a thruster boost, the mini mobile suits started to move toward the space dust in orbit. They would cut down those things that were too big to carry back. To them, junk was just junk; just a commodity to reclaim in order to decide who gets more back. *“There’s a life like that then,”* Marida thought. A life where she wouldn’t take other people’s lives or have her life taken. After thinking about her life in one year, ten years, or even longer, a life to fight for tomorrow would…

“The enemies shot down today may one day be reclaimed?" Marida looked at the lights that didn’t involve her and thought.

Part 6[edit]

The girl moved through the ship that brought her here. She went through three compartments, and arrived at the central bay.

The docking had begun, and a variable-sized communicator that looked something like a harmonica was connected to the bridge and air lock of the *Garencieres*. As she looked through the window and saw that the workers inside the ship were busy, the girl cautiously left the room.

She closed the visor on her spacesuit’s helmet. The helmet wasn’t that important when there was air, but the girl was mainly using it to hide her face. Most of the port workers would be wearing spacesuits, and if she was lucky, she could sneak through. The girl held a mobile handle and moved through the narrow corridor, reached the hatch of the ship,

and decisively opened the air lock.

The wind caused by the difference in air pressure between the outside of the ship and the inside remained unheard, thanks to the sound of metal colliding, the sound of the exhaust of an overhead crane, and an audio broadcast by the dockmaster. The center dock was a large space that was almost 500 meters across, and the floor and the ceiling —though it was meaningless to call them that when there wasn't any gravity—had four canes each. Each of those cranes were attached to trading ships like the *Garencieres*. The girl went through the air lock, let her body float towards the floor twenty meters away. Before the magnetic boots of the spacesuit touched the ground, the girl took out a cable gun from her belt and fired at the side of a crane.

The magnet on the end of the cable stuck to the crane. The girl squeezed the trigger again, and the cable began coiling, carrying the girl to the magnet. Tools like this were really important when working in zero gravity.

After the cable finished coiling, the magnet disengaged from the crane. Aiming at another point, she fired the cable again. Like this, the girl moved towards the exit of the dock. On her way to the exit, she past the crew of the *Garencieres*, but since everyone was busy dealing with the docking, and she had her spacesuit and visor on, no one recognized her. The girl reached the exit without anyone noticing, and then used a mobile handle to move on. The mobile handle installed on the wall and handrail went faster the tighter it was gripped, and a strong squeeze sent the girl towards the industrial area.

The ships that had already cleared inspection were docked at this port. Thus, it wasn't hard to leave, and there should be no problems if the industrial port wasn't actively operating. The problem was how to reach the colony builder on the other side of the space colony. As the girl remembered the map of Industrial 7 she had memorized, she slipped among a group of workers and entered the main terminal.

The girl had a plan. At the center core of Industrial 7, there was an artificial sun. This installation reached out to both sides of the colony, and created the illusion of night and day. In the old century's manner of speech, it was something like an elaborate play.

The artificial sun had a walkway for inspection that connected to both ends of the space colony. Naturally, this wasn't a place anyone would normally go. And since the artificial sun gave off lots of heat, the pathway couldn't be used in the day. However, if the girl used that walkway, she wouldn't have to enter the space colony proper, and could quickly reach the other side. There was a chance that she could

get near the colony builder, usually restricted to public access, and find a chance to sneak in.

4:50 AM. The girl checked her watch to make sure there was still time until daylight, and took off her spacesuit helmet. She pulled her short brown hair out of the suit, and floated into a nearby restroom.

Now that she was out of the busy part of the port, it would be too conspicuous to wear a spacesuit. She entered the restroom stall that had a toilet bowl for especially for use in zero gravity, took off her spacesuit, and put on dark blue jeans and a white blouse, then left the restroom. She ignored the whistling worker who passed by her as she put on a jacket that was as fluffy as a shawl, then grabbed a mobile handle and moving to the exit of the tower. As it was probably not time for a shift change, there weren't many people at the exit.

"I have to get to the colony builder before Zinnerman and Marida get there and meet the person I need to talk to," The girl thought as she moved out of the terminal building.

Part 7[edit]

A while back, Banagher was in the same Terminal Building, at the office of Bubbo's Company, facing the Chief of the Management Section.

"So I can't sortie today?"

"That's the instructions of the superiors. A trading ship's about to enter at the last minute, so I had to send a crane out first…I asked the previous shift to handle the rest, and they went off."

While the superiors ask for increase in efficiency, the subordinates ask for improvement in working environment, and the Chief of Management had to explain that the blame wasn't on him. Right now, the large amount of space dust caused lots of social problems, and the Bubbo Company showed marked improvement in growth. However, most people viewed them as merely junk collectors who overturned things, and there's a rather bleak feeling about this. Even if they changed their title from 'Junk Collector' to 'Resource Collector', the understanding of society would not change. At this operation base of <<Industrial 7>> and everyone inside, including the Chief had a rather lonely feeling.

It was really no surprise that Bubbo Company would lend out cranes to a ship that just arrived, but to Banagher who came here to work part-time, it wasn't worth being so happy about. The morning shift squad had already left, so those who were working today flew off. There was

no latest mini mobile suits to use, and everything was just a waste of time. Banagher really wanted to grumble ‘I finally became the first one here…’ or something like that.

“Sorry, I’ll add some extra money for your overtime fee next time.”

The bespectacled Chief smiled and seemed to be busy managing the delayed trip. He wasn’t hiding the fact that he didn’t have the time to deal with part-time workers as he went into the office to get the call. The two workers who were working night shift were also lowering their heads and staring at their screens. Seeing them like this, Banagher didn’t have the energy to talk more as he left the office that had the smell of plastic. The word ‘Disjointed’ went through his mind again.

Banagher let Haro exit onto the corridor first, kicked against the wall that had footprints all over it, and let his body float towards the corridor window that could look at the central port. The number 4 crane Bubbo Company used was parked at a ship he had no impression on. It was an old-styled Vertical Take-off and Landing (VTOL) Craft. The ship that was obviously stained had the logo ‘RIbakoona Trading’ on it and the ship’s name <<Garencieres>>.

“The name’s rather delicate…”

As he muttered this a little grudgingly, he found that Takuya was coming in from the other end of the corridor. Takuya let go of the handle that was moving at the fastest speed possible before his body landed on the cushion on the wall due to inertia. The first thing he spoke was: “Banagher, you bastard…!” And Banagher silently pointed to the office’s entrance.

Takuya was also stunned as he then walked into the office, and soon appeared on the corridor after 1 minute. He looked like he didn’t know what was going on, but he chuckled on seeing Banagher, and even said (That’s karma, karma.) Even Haro was flapping its ear disks and crying ‘Retribution, retribution’. Banagher carried Haro and left the corridor.

There was still three hours until vocational lessons began, and Banagher and Takuya didn’t want to head back to the hostel to sleep. Thus, they went to the cafeteria in the industrial area. The cafeteria that was facing the inside of the space colony was also a rest area that functioned as an observatory post, so they could still take a little nap at this time.

In this <<Industrial 7>> space colony that was almost completely

covered with factories, the zero gravity industrial area that was linked to the docking bay was the largest production base. There were all sorts of production lines, from metal, refining, heating to assembly, and it included a production work that made use of the zero gravity environment. This place produces everything related to industrial needs, from the screws used on a train to the <<gundanrium alloy>>.

To the industrial area that works for 3 shifts, 24 hours a day, no matter whether it was midnight or morning, it was just a unit of time. Once they entered the unloading area that was full of air, they could hear the sounds of mini mobile suits moving about, hoots and controllers shouting, and also the sounds of metal colliding with each other. Soon, they heard the voices of the operator shouting :"DAMN BRATS! WEAR A HELMET HERE!" Banagher and Takuya shouted, "Sorry!" but didn't slow down as they grabbed hard onto the mobile handle and continued to head to the unloading area that would lead to the cafeteria.

On the way, Banagher mentioned to Takuya about how he saw a white mobile suit in the subway train. Takuya, who was studying mobile suits and aimed to be a test pilot, was already familiar with military affairs such that he could be said to be a fanatic of it. Banagher thought that his facial expression would change on hearing a new mobile suit, but Takuya's reaction was unexpectedly cold.

"The war with Zeon is over. The Federation finally started with reprogramming. Even if a new mobile suit is developed, it would just be a minor modification to a <<GM>>."

"But that machine was completely white and had a single horn on it. It really looked special. Since it's a reprogrammed one, it's not weird to see a new mobile suit developed, right?"

"Fool, that's something that can only happen during war. Why would they allocate some of the budget to develop a new mobile suit if there's no imaginary enemy."

That sounded logical. "Is that so…" "You really don't know anything." On hearing such a response, Banagher felt like he may want to find a hole to hide in.

No matter what aspect it is, someone who works hard on one thing would have the keen eyesight of observing the world from that perspective, and Banagher felt a little short and behind others for not being able to have it. It wasn't too bad if it was an ordinary high school student, but someone studying this 'one-way trip' at Anaheim Electronics would feel really guilty.

“It’s great that you had a goal.”

Thus, Banagher suddenly raised this issue. Takuya looked somewhat surprised and gave a wry look “What are you saying?”

“Aren’t you planning to go develop the Jupiter zone?”

“That’s true…”

However, Banagher was different from Takuya. He merely chose one subject out of many when he transferred into Anaheim Electronics Institute College, and didn’t really have a particular insistence. Banagher merely wanted to see Jupiter and was moved by the term trail blazer, but he lost all enthusiasm when he thought of how he had to study engineering and mathematics. No, it’s not that he found studying hard, but that he found himself ‘disjointed’ when he was mixed together with a group a really passionate volunteers.

Thinking about this, the doubts Banagher often had would appear in his mind, whether he should be here? He searched through the layers of his memories as to why he was here. His mother died, and on the night of the funeral, a group of men in suits appeared and said, “We’re hired by your father.” And told him that his life will be assured in the future. After that, what he got was a transfer application to Anaheim Electronics Institute College—

They never explained what kind of person his father was, and only said that one day, he would meet him personally. Banagher himself didn’t want to ask too much. It wasn’t really much of an interest to him, but as both mother and son relied on each other for more than 10 years, anyone would be troubled about a father who suddenly appeared, and no matter what the reason was, Banagher didn’t want to recognize a man who wouldn’t even come to his mother’s funeral. At the same time, he felt that if he opened himself too much, he would be betraying his mother.

His mother was a kind and strong-willed person who raised Banagher alone and made Banagher forget that he needed a father. Though the ever-changing jobs and residences caused Banagher to end up transferring schools without having time to make friends, it wasn’t his mother’s fault. Banagher would always remember how on Christmas night at the age of 5, that this Haro was sent over without warning.

His mother said that it was a present from Santa Claus, but Banagher knew that it was a present sent over by his father. After that, his mother would keep moving houses like she was running away from disaster, perhaps to get away from his father. And his mother would be

unhappy if he asked. Thus, Banagher knew before the age of ten that this was a question he couldn't ask.

"He's really a strong-willed person. You can be proud to be his son. But I know that his strength won't bring happiness to us mother and son, so mom can only bring you away from that person…"

His mother would only talk about this when his father was mentioned. Whenever his mother asked "Do you understand?" Banagher could only pretend to understand and nod his head. Both mother and son stayed in an old space colony at <<Side 1>>, an old residential area near the slums. Banagher grew up watching his mother who shouldn't be living in such a place, felt that he shouldn't cause too much trouble for his mother, and started to feel troubled by the 'disjointed' feeling in him.

It's especially because of that unknown reason that he started to feel 'disjointed' ever since he first had his memories. It was different from feeling out of place. It felt like there was a place he should really be at, but that his mind and body was being separated from that place. This baseless feeling still didn't disappear even after he accepted the invitation of this father of his that he never met before and stayed in <<Industrial 7>>. The naïve expectation that this 'disjointed' feeling would disappear the moment he came here was just a rhapsody of his own youth. Banagher could calmly analyze this aspect of himself in hindsight.

He thought that if he put on the uniform of Anaheim Electronics and thought of becoming a member of this large corporation, he could forget all about this. However, after 8 months of hostel life, what he got was only an ordinary license and a mini mobile suit license. In the days that never changed, where things never really happened, the 'disjointed' feeling started to grow. Right now, he still didn't know his father's true identity, and neither did he try to know as he was already having a hard time handling the future that was becoming smaller.

Why did I come here? Why do I feel that I am looking forward to this 'Disjointed' feeling being filled up? As he carried the Haro that he took care of all this time, Banagher pondered. *Was it that I want to meet my father? To see where I come from? But even if we meet, nothing will change. Even if I know my origins, I can't be assured that there will be where I will go…*

His thoughts just continued to beat around like this as they went from the unloading bay to the cargo area. Takuya, who was walking in front, shouted excitedly, "Wow, that's a huge find!" and Banagher lifted his head up.

At a corner of the large cargo area, there were the remains of a mobile suit. It's unknown whether it was the Bubbo Company or other 'Junk Collector' company who took it in. The parts below the knees were severed, and those parts under the right shoulder were gone. However, the dark green body and the head with the one eye were still intact, and it was still easy to identify what the damaged thing was. This was really a great find, and even Banagher felt this way. Almost all the remains of space colonies or mobile suits were taken back, and as mainstream mobile suits became mini ones that were only able to pull scraps, it's really rare to see such a relatively intact scrap. It's unknown who found it, but the person who found it can earn half a year's worth of salary with this. Banagher and Takuya let go of the hand and floated towards the remains.

"Is that a <<Zaku>>?"

As he reached the deck where he could look down at the remains, Banagher grabbed onto the handrail and asked Takuya. That used to be the main fighting force of the Republic of Zeon, the name of the line of machines and also the mother of all mobile suits. No matter whether

it was the green frame that had lots of spikes on the left shoulder armor, Banagher really couldn't think of any other machine that had these characteristics. However, Takuya answered: "Idiot, that's not it."

"That's the <<Geara Doga>>, a machine used during 'Char's Counterattack'."

"Never heard of it. I'm not that crazy about machines."

"This is created by Anaheim! Remember that."

Takuya used his finger to point at the temple, and Banagher just stared at the remains of the mobile suit. The machine that obviously had burned scars had workers all around using their handheld notebooks to enter data into. It's unknown whether they were trying to diagnose the selling price of the machine or how to distribute this once they decide to split this out. The one eye and the visor glass were broken, but the power source that was severed off was leaking oil, making one wonder if the reactor could still work. The still-human appearance that remained made one wonder that it may be a remain that could move once someone adjust it.

Maybe the pilot was able to get out in time? Banagher had this idea as he turned his eyes to the cockpit at the abdomen, but gasped as he found that he was wrong. The armor plate that was protecting the cockpit was twisted by the heat, opening a hole that was 1m long. It looked like a beam weapon shot through it, burning through the cocking, leaving a laser bullet hole and vaporizing the pilot. It looked just like a black hole that led to an endless darkness. That was the action of humans who made the hole, one that was unrelated to them, called war. It was deep and black, looking like it was about to absorb someone into it—

"…The war's over. There won't be any new frames now."

Takuya swallowed his saliva and mentioned what they were talking about just now. The side of his face seemed to be a little white.

"There aren't any news on terrorism recently."

"There's still some remnants of Zeon, but the scale's not large enough to form an army. The Defense Ministry wrote in black and white that 'We're cleaning up after the war on Zeon'."

"The space colony I was staying on once had a freelance reporter, but he said something about space residents living independently, and I didn't feel anything much after hearing it."

Side 3, which was on the back of the Moon, was self-proclaimed the

Republic of Zeon that declared its independence from the Earth Federation and triggered what's called the One Year War. Banagher understood this as well. The dark wasteland region where <<Industrial 7>> was where the remains of the initial battle both sides had, the 'Battle of Loum'. Banagher himself was born under this offensive age where half the population was wiped out—what sociologists call babies born after the war. During the 16 years of war, the so-called remnants of Zeon continued to launch conflicts one after another, creating terrorist attacks on a grand scale. However, these were another thing entirely to Banagher and the rest, just information taught through televised news and textbooks. No matter whether it was the war or the independent movements of the space residents, it was nothing different from fiction to them.

However, the dark bullet hole in front of them showed them that all these were real. It caused them to realize that people really died from this and reprimanded them of their lazy lifestyles. They talked to each other in perfect unison and left this place. The image of war that suddenly appeared in front of them wasn't so easily erased, and that deep and dark hole that led to emptiness shot through Banagher's heart.

The cafeteria that was facing the inside of the space colony had one wall that was completely made of glass, and they could see the streets on the inside of the wall from the center of the cylinder. It was 5:20am, and the artificial sun that goes through the entire inside of the colony wasn't activated as there seemed to be a thin carpet of light seen inside the wall of the colony from 3,000m height.

In another 10 minutes, the artificial sun would declare the start of the day, and the vast amount of light and heat would bring about morning to <<Industrial 7>>. At that moment, the windows of the cafeteria would have a light filter on to reduce the shine the artificial sun would release at close range. However, there was no need to cover it for now. The artificial sun outside the window that lead to the other side of the space colony was still in darkness. There were few people who were in the cafeteria at this point, and Banagher and Takuya were holding onto their own trays as they sat beside the window.

They were discussing about what to do with the report they have to hand in a month later, just before summer vacation began, how the old hag in physics lesson would mess them up, and talked around before Takuya started yawning. After putting the empty soup pipe onto the tray, he said "I'm going to sleep" and used the zero gravity environment to put his legs about. Banagher was trained by his mother strictly and couldn't be as rash as he was. However, he did feel that he

was trying his best to get along with his surroundings and let himself loose already.

“Get some sleep, man. Micott’s going to have a party at her house tonight.”

Takuya closed his eyes as he said that. Banagher answered back: “Really?” But didn’t sound very interested.

“Our technical school has too many people with no charm, but her school has quite a lot of good girls there. This is a good chance to get to know them. Better save our energy here, or else it’ll be sad if we’re still single once it’s summer.”

“Aren’t you going back to your old home? Even if you have a girlfriend here…”

“Don’t say that. I do go to the <<Francesca Colony>> with my family to do manual labor. Bringing my younger siblings out to fish in the day, barbequing at night with relatives; I can be so happy that I could cry. How can I hang on without a girlfriend waiting for me?”

“Don’t go then.”

“I can’t do that. That’s the bond of family…”

Takuya suddenly shut up and opened an eye before asking: “What are you going to do during summer vacation?” Banagher could only shrug at this concern that bothered him “Who knows.”

“I don’t have any relatives when I go back home, and I shifted. I guess the most I can do is to stay here and continue to work and earn money, and that I can earn my school fees before my sponsor changes his mind.”

“Haven’t you heard anything from your dad?”

“Un. Well, I don’t know what I should do if there really was news.”

“Fu-n…that’s really hard to understand. Calling you here and not coming to see you.”

Takuya felt that this was the only way he could show concern as an outsider and didn’t mention this again. He diverted the topic and said “Then you should take advantage of tonight. There’s only one summer when you’re 16 years old.”

“Un…”, Banagher merely answered methodically as he continued to look outside the dark window.

However, it wasn't that he wasn't interested. Like others, Banagher went through romantic relationships and breakups, and he did have a few girlfriends at his hometown. However, what seemed to be a happy thing to them wasn't a happy thing to Banagher himself. Also, he never actually got on well with them, and was always seen through. Thus, the relationship would never last long. Girls in their youth really can't stand creatures like insincere men, and anything more didn't exist.

No. it was just because he never really had a real romantic relationship. Maybe things would change if he found a good partner. Maybe tonight's party may solve this. Banagher forced himself to think this way. This may be an encounter that could clear all the 'disjointed' feeling he had with the world and enchant him; an encounter that would make this Industrial space colony look rose colored; an encounter that could land him at where he lived. He would become a member who would walk in and out of a factory, covered with sweat and oil, and have a drink on the way home from work as an occasional luxury—an encounter that could allow him to accept this life.

Right outside the windows, the streets lights before dawn broke. The lights on the highway were showing a spiral shape, and what looked like lights from night delivery lorries were gliding silently. In another 2 hours, most of the people would get up and rush to their respective workplaces. The people who were waiting at the bus stops for buses will form crowds, and the subway trains that were filled with workers changing shifts will move between the streets inside the wall and the industrial area. Today, that's just like yesterday and may be like tomorrow, continued to operate like a conveyor belt.

"Will we become part of this once we graduate…"

Feeling that intense 'disjointed' feeling again, Banagher muttered. Takuya didn't answer back, and as Banagher looked at him, he found that the body that was almost asleep was floating up from the table. As he grabbed Takuya's shoulders and pressed him back onto the chair like magic tape, Banagher saw 'that thing' outside the window.

At the base that's 100m above the cafeteria, at the pillar of the artificial sun that was reached out to the opposite side of the space colony—there was a warning light flashing. There was something floating as it crossed near the large pillar in the darkness. He first thought that it was junk. It's obvious for junk to be stuck near the sun after being taken away by an artificial convection when the space colony's being built in the opposite direction. However, the 'object' that was so small that it would disappear into the darkness, and that it was moving on its own. It seemed to be frantically flailing its limbs and moving its body to

control its body as it flew with the wind.

He consciously let his body float near the window and grabbed Haro's fluttering ears in the air from underneath the table. Banagher looked at that 'object' that was lit up by the weak warning light. That's right, there was someone. Someone was floating near the artificial sun. it was 1km away, but Banagher could see—or rather, feel that the person who was floating had a cape-shaped coat on.

It was soon going to be daybreak, and there couldn't possibly be testing on the artificial sun. Banagher looked at the person who wasn't even wearing a spacesuit. The figure left the artificial sun and floated towards the wall. It's obvious that the person was in trouble, and it would be easy to spot in daylight. However, at that moment, the artificial sun would be activated, and the surrounding air would be really hot. The cylinder that was 6km in diameter was a large source of light to the entire space colony, and would burn up anything nearby.

"…Not good."

Banagher looked at the watch. It was 5:26am. There's still less than 5 minutes to daylight. "Eh? What's wrong?" Banagher left behind Takuya as Takuya rubbed his eyes, kicked the table, and rushed through the empty cafeteria, using the pillar near the entrance as the support point and rushed to the corridor. At this moment where not even a second was to be wasted, he didn't even think of explaining this to anyone else, and the body that was pushed by impulse continued to rush to the worksite.

Part 8[edit]

She really couldn't understand what happened for the time being. In her eyes, what she could only see was the artificial sun pillar that was leaving her and the street lights and clouds on the inside of the wall appearing and disappearing at the same time as the winds blew past her ears.

As she kicked her legs about forward, the girl tried to stop the spinning on her body. However, against this artificial wind, such an action was futile. There was an endless steady supply of wind inside the colony to allow for convection of the sun's heat. The artificial convection installation that was installed in the zero gravity area was moving the air, creating a complicated flow of wind near the sun.

The girl held back the fear that was rising up her throat, telling herself to calm down. She had managed to slip into the artificial solar inspection area and arrived on the passageway that was parallel to the

illuminating installation. She just needed to grab the mobile handle and move forward for about 20m, and she should be able to reach the other side of the space colony in less than 30 minutes—where her target, the colony builder.

However, she didn't expect that pathway to have a section cut off because of repairs. It was too late once she moved in for about 1km, felt that the tunnel was blocked and let go of the handle. The girl's body flew out in motion, breaking the plastic seal that blocked the passage, and dropped outside the passage.

At the same time, she knocked into the fire extinguisher that was placed on the platform, and got the gas squirted at her, causing the situation to become complicated. The girl was pushed away from the artificial sun pillar because of the gas pressure. And under the vacuum of zero gravity, there's nothing she could grab onto. The girl became a speck of space dust that was floating in the core of the space colony. She was forced away by the gas pressure and the airflow convection, and was pushed down to the wall 3000m away—

The artificial sun was gradually getting further and further away. The layers of moving clouds and the street lights that were inside the wall were closing in. The centrifuge force of the space colony wouldn't work without direct contact. It looked like she could land safely, but the problem was the rotation speed that create the 1G worth of gravity. It looked slow from here, but in fact, the inside wall of the space colony was rotating about 600km per hour. The girl's body was out of the rotation speed, and if she got close to the inner wall and hit the wall that's rotating at high speeds, she would be pancaked.

However, she couldn't just wait for help in zero gravity as a premonition started. *BAM BAM*, continuous tremors could be heard through the air of the space colony. This was the voice of the artificial sun getting powered up. It was the awakening of a laminating device, the sound of it letting off light as it burned the air around it.

I don't want to die. No, I can't die. The girl didn't give up as she moved her limbs and tried to get close to the artificial sun's passageway. She was already prepared to die, but she wouldn't allow herself to die like this. For the sake of the warriors who fought to protect her, her parents who died early, and she wouldn't forgive herself if she were to die in such an ugly manner.

This thought was more frightening than death itself. However, the artificial sun that seemed to mock the struggling girl got louder and louder, and the laminating installation started to brighten.

Part 9[edit]

Luckily, there was a mini mobile suit parked at the carpark beside the cafeteria. It was the latest model from the Toruro company, Type-800, commonly known as the <<Torohachi>>. There wasn't anyone on the machine, which, to Banagher, was a pleasant surprise.

Perhaps the operator went to the toilet as the key was still in the machine. Banagher sat inside the cockpit of the <<Torohachi>> to check whether it still had power. While the worker shouted: "HEY, YOU…!", Banagher shouted back: "Danger!" as he undid the feet clamp on the floor. As he ignored the middle-aged worker "WHO ARE YOU! DON'T MOVE!" and let the <<Torohachi>> move forward, a green ball-shaped object slammed into the helmet of the worker and jumped into the cockpit. "Haro…!?" Banagher couldn't help but exclaim before tucking Haro between his thighs before covering the hemisphere windshield visor.

Once Banagher did the basic minimum safety checks, he undid the magnetic locks on the legs. The short legs of the <<Torohachi>>

kicked the ground and floated up. Banagher stepped on the gas, and the thruster at the back lit up. The <<Torohachi>> headed off towards the cargo exit of the space colony and accelerated.

At the front end of the space colony, the sudden slope of the zero gravity industrial area under the wall was called the ‘mountain’. Like its name implied, it was a bare layer of rock and trees and plants covered the mortar-type airtight wall. If one looked up from the inside, what would be seen would be like a famous 3,000m high mountain—Mount Fuji. The mountaintop that was hidden amongst the clouds had many cable cars stations and the exits for cargo ships as they move through the zero gravity belt. The <<Torohachi>> went through one entrance and moved towards the artificial sun. The artificial upflow that struck caused the machine to shake, but Banagher continued to look around for the figure floating in the darkness.

Without relying on night vision goggles, Banagher found the floating figure. He didn’t spend the effort to feel how strange it was. Banagher again activated the thruster boost of the <<Torohachi>>. This was different from driving in vacuum as the machine was heavy. The air that filled the entire space colony formed a wall, and the shaking of the machine was felt through the control rod. For a moment, he felt that he was really reckless, but this rash of sanity immediately disappeared.

The artificial sun started to glow, and there wasn’t much time left before it was completely activated and burns the surrounding air. Banagher activated the motion sensor and let the relative distance between his machine and the target and the speeds show on the control screen. Though it was the same as collecting space junk, the target this time was a living human. If his methods were too rough, the person may be killed.

The distance from the figure got closer and closer, and he could already see the cape-like jacket fluttering from behind the windshield and the long and narrow limbs of a person. It was a girl—as his instincts told her this, a large amount of shaking happened to the machine, and Banagher hurriedly adjusted the power of the thruster boost. Haro floated up because of the impact as its eyes flashed, calling: “Do your best, do your best!”

The <<Torohachi>> again shot out the thrusters and closed in on the target. It seemed that the target seemed to notice the machine’s sound and light as the figure that was floating in the vacuum turned to look at the machine. The jade green eyes had light in them even in the midst of the darkness as they looked like polished gems.

At that moment, the existence of a living being went through

Banagher's body, and he immediately opened the windshield. This wasn't out of thought, but that his instincts were telling him that this body in front of him was too fragile to be held by the hard mechanical hand of the mini mobile suit.

The wind that struck hard covered his eyes and mouth. The windshield that was opened let in lots of wind, causing the body of the <<Torohachi>> to silt a lot. He used a hand to grab the controls to barely maintain the state of the machine, and used the other hand to reach for the girl. The girl that was floating with the winds widened her eyes and reached over here too. Once their eyes met, the <<Torohachi>> and the human figure grazed past each other for a moment, and Banagher held that person's hand and pulled her into the cockpit.

After that, the artificial sun glowed, bathing the body of the <<Torohachi>> in white light. Banagher continued to hold onto the human's slender and thin body as he closed the windshield visor and stepped on the gas. He didn't see the horrifying image of the air heating up and immediately expanding and twisting over. An

explosive-like light suppressed them and sent the <<Torohachi>> descending to the inner wall.

The wind blew in through the windshield visor that wasn't completely closed, causing the purple jacket to be draped on Banagher. Banagher lost his bearings and stepped too hard onto the gas pedal. Even though he immediately pulled the jacket away and maintained eye contact, the large pillar supporting the artificial sun inside the wall was already right in front of him. The metal pillar came crashing over at the rotation speed of the space colony—about the same as a passenger jet, and grazed past the <<Torohachi>>'s frame.

The impact rang through the cockpit, and the numbness in Banagher's brain caused him to lose consciousness for a while. The streets that were flowing below the feet were spinning wildly and fast approaching. The figure on the knees shouted: "We'll fall…!" Feeling her breasts crushing his shoulders, Banagher finally managed to get himself out of confusion and responded: "I'll think of something." before looking at the current state of the inner wall after the high speed rotation. The <<Torohachi>> didn't have the inertia to go back up again, and its strength wasn't going to match the relative speed of the inner wall—having made such a conclusion within a second, Banagher again grabbed the control stick.

He used the maximum amount of thrust to make the <<Torohachi>> move forward, trying his best to control the machine at a constant height while it descended. It moved onto the road that was located between the light industrial area and the residential area. Even though the speed was estimated to be more than 200km per hour, and that it would continue to accelerate with the wind flow, but there was a difference of 400km per hour in terms of relative speed. Once he checked to see that there were no vehicles or humans, Banagher muttered deep inside his heart "I can do this." and deliberately lowered the height of the <<Torohachi>> and flew into a group of buildings.

The <<Torohachi>> looked like it was trying its best to keep its thruster boost working as it continued to move towards the road with the space colony still rotating. It descended till 5m tall, went through the crane while under the high speeds of the wind, and struck from behind by the air. The height continued to descend. On seeing the rear view mirror, Banagher evaded the street lights and the electronic cars that were moving, and just when the height meter was about to reach zero, he shouted: "Brace for impact!"

The feet of the <<Torohachi>> hit the road, and suddenly, the machine that was gripped by the centrifuge force was tilted backwards like it

was knocked away, causing an impact where one could imagine bones scattered all over the place. The impact and echoes rang in the brain, and the safety gasbags shot out from the control panel. While feeling intense pain from the safety belt and the tense shoulders and the touch as he held that slender waist with his palms, Banagher's consciousness was lost in the turmoil. The loud sounds that surrounded him and the jerks on the machine that was lying face up on the road were gradually moving further away, and the fragments of the asphalt road that was smashed covered his darkened vision. Then, his vision seemed to have what looked like cables used for a cable car, and finally, a large impact struck, and he was then surrounded in darkness.

The dirt that was raised up by the windshield fell through the cracks and landed on face. *Kinkyuu*, *Kinkyuu*, Haro continued to make noises and caused Banagher to wake up. He felt the pain on his neck and shoulders, frowned and looked up at the sky through the thoroughly broken windshield. The bright and familiar sky was right in front of him. The streets on the inner wall at the respective positions were also basked in light such that it's hard to even tell that it was an artificial sun giving off light. This was a sealed off space colony's vague sky.

On his chest, there was a face that was unconscious as it was lit by the light—Banagher wasn't completely awake as he saw the stranger's face as she was lying on his chest. What couldn't be called a figure but a real human was a girl of about the same age as she was. The hair that was blown wildly had a beautiful beige color to it, and the delicate skin that was thoroughly white had some red in it. The eyes he saw at that moment—the bright jade-colored eyes that had such a deep impression on him were hidden under the long eyebrows.

There was a soft human smell and the smell of perfume coming out from her hair, floating into Banagher's nose that was used to gasoline. His heartbeat started to accelerate at this moment. Banagher gently put the girl's body away from him, checked that she was still breathing, and left her on the seat before climbing out of the cockpit.

It seemed that the <<Torohachi>> seemed to have broken through the railing of the green park, dug some lawn and crashed into the hill. The short body was half buried in dirt. Even though it couldn't be seen from here, the surface of the track should be rather defaced like the devastation caused by a landing of a meteor.

There wasn't anyone around, and the morning brought some light amounts of mist in the park. It was so quiet that only the voices of

sparrows could be heard. If it was on a bright day where many people were walking around…thinking about this, Banagher finally realized that he was in big trouble as his knees started to tremble. The police and the fire department would be here immediately, creating lots of commotion in this entire space colony, and he may be arrested. He wanted to save someone, but he drove a mini mobile suit around recklessly and destroyed the streets. Things weren't going to be dealt with so easily, and he may even be expelled—

Suddenly, his ankle was grabbed and tugged at hard. Banagher, who was standing on the <<Torohachi>>, unexpectedly lost his footing, and fell before he could even shout out.

His face and stomach hit the bare ground, and the pain could be felt through his nostrils. He couldn't breathe for a moment, but Banagher still used both hands to try and get up. However, someone pressed down on him, and Banagher's face was buried in dirt again.

"Who are you!?"

Banagher was held down on the floor by the person who let out this voice, had his head pressed down on the floor and his arms twisted behind his back. Unable to move, Banagher tried to turn around to see who was the one speaking, and shown in one corner of his eyes was those pair of jade-colored eyes.

The refined jade-colored eyes were giving off a cold stare as they looked down at him. Banagher moved his sandy mouth that was filled with dirt and murmured: "And even now you ask who I am…"

"I saw you floating near the sun, so I…"

Banagher still couldn't understand why this slender looking girl was using a hard militaristic tone to talk and hold him down. The girl still did not let her guard down. At this moment, Haro didn't seem to understand what was going on as it spoke "Banagher, Banagher, are you alright?" and went about the head. The girl seemed to turn her head around, see the Haro that was bouncing around inside the <<Torohachi>>, and slightly removed the grip of her right hand on Banagher. "You're a citizen of this colony?" Once Banagher nodded his head, she finally released Banagher on the neck before getting up.

Before Banagher could even regain his freedom and stand up, the girl had climbed into the <<Torohachi>>'s cockpit, seemingly checking the control panel to see whether it was still powered. The girl didn't apologize nor thank him as she merely said 'this can still move', causing Banagher to blink in a bewildered manner.

“I’m in a rush here. Can you send me to the entrance of the colony builder?”

The girl poked her upper body from the control panel and said that nonchalantly. “Space builder…you mean the <<Snail>>?” Banagher asked back, and the girl confirmed this with her determined expression.

“No way. That’s not allowed. And you have to get to the hospital first.”

“You caught me well, so I wasn’t hurt. Please, it’s urgent.”

“I told you I can’t! I’m already going to get punished for operating this. I may even get my license revoked!”

While Banagher tried to explain himself, the girl listened as she gave a doubting ‘Why must you resist me’ look, and it seemed that both of them lost it and in another world altogether. However, the girl still remained calm. She jumped off the cockpit and muttered: “There’s no time.” with her words obviously sounding a little anxious.

“I have to find someone and talk to him. The situation can’t be saved if we don’t go faster.”

“What? Is something going to happen?”

“A war. There’ll be a large-scale war again. We can still stop it if we move now.”

Banagher’s heart pounded as he looked at the girl’s eyes. The deep jade-colored eyes didn’t look like they lost their sanity, and neither did they look like they were hoping for any agreement. It’s just a strong will that showed that she had to do it. Banagher felt attracted to that strength of hers. He would have nodded his head immediately if not for the sirens of the patrol cars.

The sirens of the patrol cars weren’t coming from one direction, but from many. The girl turned around to look back before looking straight at Banagher in the eyes for him to quickly decide. He held back the throbbing in his heart and looked away from the girl, saying: “Sorry, I can’t do this.” The girl lowered her jaw and looked grim immediately, using this chance to give Banagher a cold stare.

“How spineless…!”

She muttered and ran off without looking back. That voice stabbed deep inside Banagher’s heart, and a pain that was even sharper and pronounced than his own injuries permeated throughout his entire body as he watched the girl go.

“What’s with her…”

As he casually left these words, Banagher remembered that he didn’t have time to ask for her name. As the girl’s profile vanished in the morning fog, what replaced them was the large number of patrol cars giving off blurry red lights through the fog as they entered Banagher’s eyes.

Chapter 2[edit]

Part 1[edit]

In the starry universe, there was a biplane that’s flying with a propeller. It was a middle-century classical plane that operates on gasoline.

As he stared at the plane blankly, Riddhe Marcenas imagined himself to be sitting on it. He was wearing a flying visor, a white muffler around his neck, and using fighting flying skills that were like acrobatics to tease the enemy’s destroyer. A pilot had to be like this. Even if the propeller planes were all replaced by jet planes or even evolved into space fighter jets with g, pilots were all proud riders. A pilot shouldn’t be part of minor things like being called out by an older non-commission officer or pointed at by a senior pilot. That’s the bad customs that passed down from the navy. And the pilots after the mid-century occupy a unique atmosphere called the air force, and they’re an unique existence that had to be separated from ordinary soldiers. At least they shouldn’t forget about this…that’s what he thought.

However, reality was cruel.

“Ensign Riddhe, the captain’s calling you over to his room.”

A window opened in the space, and the Mechanical Officer Jona Gibney’s mustached face chuckled as he said that. He was the oldest and the most experienced of the maintenance staff, and he was one of those senior soldiers who would not hesitate to scold an officer. Riddhe was sitting on the linear seat and pouted, “Why always me?”

“You have to bring stuff to the captain’s room. This job is more or less suited for a rich boy!”

“I’m an officer too, you know! This has nothing to do with lineage, right?”

“Only those who shot down an enemy’s plane has the right to say that. Now go!”

Mechanical Officer Gibney’s face disappeared from the screen, and

only angry roars echoed throughout the cockpit. Riddhe unhappily turned off the all-view monitor and grabbed the biplane model that was floating above his head.

Once the space simulated image disappeared, the screens that were connected on the inside walls of the ball, and the cockpit suddenly became a cramped and unpleasant cockpit. Riddhe used a plastic bag to wrap the plastic body of the biplane and put it behind the display guard before opening the door. The door that could only be passed through by bending down was right in front of him. The sound of welding, cranes and metals rubbing against each other entered the cockpit.

Also, there was a chatter behind him, and Gibney, who was in that jumpsuit that the mechanical staff would wear was showing blank white eyes. Riddhe kicked the linear seat and easily let his body float out of the cockpit. Gibney's body didn't move as he floated in the air, and he said with a heinous tone, "Were you meditating inside that cockpit again?"

"I'm embracing the time when I can be one with my beloved plane. Are you touched?"

"And you even dare to say that you brought a toy in!"

"Please don't randomly touch and spoil it. That's a limited edition. It was hard to get it!"

One has to strike the fine balance between being orderly and doing things one's own way. One shouldn't remember the grudges when there's vexing words said, but to forget it after hearing it. Having grasped the secret to ship service, Riddhe took the documents he was to deliver and left. "Who cares about you, Mr Mania?" after leaving these words behind, Gibney looked like he exchanged places with Riddhe as he slipped into the cockpit. His underlings, 4 new technicians in spacesuits followed him from behind and looked into the cockpit from all directions.

Their job was to pay attention to all of Gibney's actions and quickly hand the important tools to him. This deck was often filled with air, so there was no need to wear the bulky work spacesuit. However, Gibney wanted the rookies to wear them at all time. "What'll happen if we're attacked and there's a hole in the wall? Once you're sucked outside, the blood in your body will immediately freeze and you'll immediately die." That was Gibney's saying, and he did see this personally on the ship he was on. Those who experienced the One Year War, the ones who fought in war, had the most weight in their words.

When Riddhe was first assigned to this ship, he would also show respect to this, and would wear a pilot's spacesuit when he entered the deck. However, he would now be lightly dressed in a jumpsuit and a jetpack. Since he's riding on a spaceship, he will die anyway if they were attacked, no matter where they were, and even Gibney himself wouldn't wear a spacesuit before the siren rang. After seeing the tense profiles of the rookies, Riddhe thought that they were really pitiful…but this made Riddhe remember his own sadness, and he suddenly had an urge to drop the documents that he was told to deliver onto the floor. He took a deep breath, held back this urge, grabbed and messed up his blond hair that was a little longer, and used the steel cable to move alongside the floor.

As he was being dragged by the cable, he could see his personal suit fully as he went near the passage that's located at the wall. It was a blue humanoid body that showed the artistry of straight and curved contours. This was the RGZ-95 <<ReZEL>> that had a variable booster unit behind. As the front part of the booster was extended out from the back of the head, it looked a lot larger than an ordinary mobile suit. Gibney and his subordinates who were gathered at the cockpit right at the abdomen looked like they were the size of the <<ReZEL>>'s fist.

On the large mobile suit deck that was more than 7 levels high, there were 7 similar-typed <<ReZEL>> and the main forces of the Earth Federation RGM-89 <<Jegan>> were also at their fixed positions and undergoing maintenance. The <<Jegan>> was a mass-produced frame, and though the <<ReZEL>> was classified as the latest transformable mobile suit, both mobile suits inherited the basic design from the Federation Army's mobile suit, the RGM-79 <<GM>>, which wasn't changed too much. Most notably, the visor protector on the head that blocks the optical sensor was of the exact same design. Riddhe's personal suit, the <<ReZEL>> had the identification number NA-R008 on the chest, and the visor that was basically its eyes was being washed.

There was no sign of any streamlined winged mobile suits, only the humanoid mobile suits that looked like they will pop out in old cartoons. This scene just looked like the rows of Buddha statues Riddhe saw with he was young and went on a trip to Asia, which irritated him again. The beauty of aircraft was created from the coordination of air resistance. Thus, it would be natural for machines that's to be used in vacuum to display other characteristics. Also, the reason why space fighter units that resembled planes and replaced by mobile suits called 'robots' was because of the One Year War that happened when

Riddhe was 6.

If one hadn't found the new particles that would bring about the revolution to physics, the Minovsky Particles that would jam all electronic devices, there wouldn't be humanoid machines that formed the basis of recent wars. If it wasn't for the creation of mobile suits and the Principality of Zeon's creation <<Zaku>> being such a huge success that caused the Earth Federation which had overwhelming advantages to be on the brink of defeat, this hangar would still have signs of the descendant of the biplane, the space fighter jets.

Of course, the fighter jets didn't disappear completely. The main machine of the Federation's air force, the <<TIN Cod II>> was a fighter plane that resembled an aircraft. The space army still had the fighter planes that were used for long distance support, but they were already out, and the budget for new machines was already interrupted for so long. Also, once the air force finished clearing the remnants of Zeon Forces on Earth, they were treated like they fulfilled their purpose and were abandoned. No matter how much one liked planes, to this person who graduated from the Officer Cadet School with outstanding grades, it wasn't an attractive path.

In the end, Riddhe came here. He was affliated to a top-notch large ship under the Federation, and became a pilot of a mobile suit. He managed to fulfill his dream since childhood…and he even used his links with his 'family'. What he got was completely different from what he expected though. He was living in the world whether that brave pilot was gone and began living his life while being called a 'young lord' by experienced pilots and soldiers as he was told off every day.

Considering that he couldn't get away from the pressure of his 'family' whenever he goes, this was still a surrounding he could compromise with. He continued to hold back the unhappiness within him and reached his hand out to the handle on the deck. Suddenly, he heard voices from under his feet going 'what's with that ugly and fake tank?'. A pilot who was being pulled by the cable was glaring at the two vehicles parked in the corner of the deck.

The dark brown machines that were over 10m in length were large crawlers. They did look like armored cars or tanks. While leaving <<Lunar Two>>, about 30 transport carrier personnel suddenly came in with the vehicles. As Riddhe watched these vehicles, other voices could be heard, 'Did the special forces bring these people in?'.

"They had been using cover to cover it, and they didn't allow us technicians to touch."

“The killer squad of the hunters. Such annoying visitors.”

On hearing these bad words that were deliberately said for others to hear, the ‘visitors’ who were maintaining the vehicle—the special Federation space forces ECOAS glared over, but the pilots themselves didn’t seem to reflect on this as they went above while holding the cable. Instead of merely being crude, it was more like small fries acting childish, and Riddhe really felt like sighing.

The ECOAS, also known as the hunter squad, had quite the bad reputation. They would often have a clear divide from the ship crew, and they would cover their equipment with cloth and not allow others to get near. Riddhe really didn’t like such secrecy at all. However, it would be immature for him to return nail for nail. Basically, the training and regimentation of the space army were all like the navy, and the group mentality for each ship was too strong. An experienced soldier like Gibney could be so cool was because of the bad habit of experience triumphing over rank. The concept of the term ‘ship’ in space and bringing the seaman’s mentality into space was the cause of all this.

If the spaceship could be described as a large plane, learning the elements of the air force may be like becoming an independent organization that had open communication channels. While repeating the meaningless grumbles, Riddhe looked over at the armored car-like thing the ECOAS had. The squad members were getting ready as they started to pull the covers off the vehicles, most likely because they were getting close to their destination, and they gave a tense feeling from their backs, making that place look like a completely different world. They were dressed in impromptu T-shirts and army pants, but they were highly skilled in moving under zero gravity, and they wouldn’t shout randomly. They weren’t extremely muscular, but the abnormally thick upper body and the thick chest muscles made them look like they trained.

Riddhe’s eyes met one of them. It was the man who shot a glare at his crewmate for saying harsh words. Riddhe gave a smile as he tried to compensate for his crewmate’s unreasonable action. But the man didn’t smile as he looked at Riddhe like he was looking at a ‘thing’ and then looked away before continuing his work.

He didn’t look like he was looking at other people. The cold inorganic-like eyes was definitely of someone nicknamed a ‘hunter’. Riddhe felt like he was being held at knifepoint on the throat as he hurriedly left.

Part 2[edit]

The ship's name was called <<Nahel Argama>>. It was an assault landing ship that belonged to the independent unit of the Earth Federation, Londo Bell. Right now, it was in between Earth and the moon, right before the dark wasteland space of L1. In three hours, they would be entering the space debris field, and they will deploy all forces to monitor the region.

The ship that was almost 400m in length had a mobile suit catapult launcher at the deck of the ship. The bridge was right in the middle like a bow, and there were 2 giant wings with hidden solar panels extending out from the back of the bridge and reaching out to both sides. If one were to designate the two engines that are equipped on the rear left and right sides of the ship as the hind legs and the catapult decks on both sides as the fore legs, it would look like a sphinx with wings or a large wooden horse. Based on this point, this ship could be said to have inherited the Pegasus-class mobile assault landing ship that was active during the One Year War—the Federation's first mobile suit carrier <<White Base>>.

However, the <<Nahel Argama>> didn't belong to any class, and neither did it have a similar ship. If there's a need to classify it, it should be classified as <<Nahel Argama>>, a one and only ship. That's because it was a ship that wasn't designed through standard National Security planning during the time after the war, in the internal tussle that divided the Federation Army into half—what one would call the Gryps War. However, it didn't have interchangeability and was hard to deal with, so it was removed from the army's reorganization plans. Though there was a large scale reconstruction after the Gryps War, Londo Bell, which took it, didn't know what to do with it, and it wasn't set as a cornerstone of a fleet. It was hard to mobilize, so there was no accompanying fleet, causing it to be mobilized as a single ship.

This ship of the external group of the space army Londo Bell was an isolated one…and the isolation caused a twisted group mentality. It couldn't be helped that the old habits of rejecting others happened. Riddhe used this thinking to scatter the anger that he couldn't purge and left the mobile suit deck to move towards the center of the ship.

These weren't all bad things, and Riddhe could even say that it's better for him to be isolated. Also, he didn't really dislike this atmosphere completely. He was the one who volunteered to be assigned to Londo Bell, and he considered his position and suitability before being assigned to the 'Nahel Argama'. If he was sent to a main fleet, that wouldn't be all the pressure. He would probably end up with his superiors fearing him, his peers hating him, and he couldn't fulfill his duty in such an environment.

The weight of his ‘family’ was this great. He was the eldest son of the important senator in the Federation Central Council Ronan Marcenas. It was a political family that once gave birth to a Prime Minister, and he was the heir to the Marcenas’ glory. This guy’s here to pilot a mobile suit? Impossible. He’ll most likely be decommissioned after a while. It’s not rare for a political heir to enter an officer cadet school as one would say that being outstanding in the Federation army would be a shortcut to being a politician. Most of the time, he would be intending to get along with future generals to creating camaraderie with the army…

No! But no matter how many times he emphasized this, such words continued to be echoed. I didn’t want to be a politician. My dream is a pilot, so I entered the Officer Cadet School even with my family against it. However, having entered officer cadet school for 4 years and the mobile suit learning squad for a year, Riddhe really felt that it was meaningless to argue back, and didn’t want to face these words already. In contrast, he started to search his way from the center. It was a place where high ranking officers wouldn’t try to latch on to him so that they would be outstanding in the future. Even if they teased him as ‘young lord’, this was a place where they wouldn’t have any ill intention, but treat him as a pilot—

However, it was unexpected that they would call him to be a runner. Grimacing inside, Riddhe let go of the moveable handle and used the momentum to float through the path and stop in front of the lift that would lead to the gravity area. Mihiro Oiwakken, who was his junior that graduated in the next batch, was coincidentally in the lift.

“Oh my, are you delivering these documents?” “Yeah.” Both of them continued to talk as the lift carried them. The inside of the <<Nahel Argama>> had a cylindrical gravity area that was like a space colony. It uses centrifugal force to create gravity on the inside of the cylinder. Of course, as the diameter was smaller, it could only create a weak amount, but even if the object’s not fastened to the floor, it could keep it to the floor. When flying for a long time, especially while eating and undergoing military medical treatment, this design would be extremely important.

The lift went through the axis on the side of the gravity area and arrived at the rotary axis of the cylinder. Both of them were exchanging information this time about the emergency departure and the uncertain battle plan before the door opened again. The destination was the Construction Space Colony <<Industrial 7>> that’s in the Dark Wasteland space. The main operation would be carried out by ECOAS, and the <<Nahel Argama>> was in charge of sending them.

“<<Industrial 7>>’s Anaheim Electronics’ Space Colony, right? The Dark Wasteland Region is a place where a new Side will be built on in the space colony redevelopment project…I don’t think that it’s a place where the ‘Sleeves’ will show up.”

“I don’t know about the details, but the atmosphere in the bridge is really bad. We’re already unhappy that the hunters are using us as a transport, and we may even end up in a real battle. First Mate Liam was forcing the captain to make the hunters tell the truth…”

“Captain Otto can’t hold on for long if that old hag’s going to continue pressuring him like that, right? Even I can’t handle it.”

“Yeah. It’s really hard to imagine him when he’s commanding.”

Even though she would say this, Mihiro herself looked like she was far from the active battle. Her dark brown eyes and hair showed a heavy Eastern heritage. She was wearing a grey officer uniform and was shorter than Riddhe. Perhaps it was because of her inferiority complex in her height that she was so hardworking, and she was giving the nickname ‘mini-tank’ in Officer Cadet School. However, she wouldn’t give a vexing feeling, and was a nice female officer who wouldn’t lose her cool. The way she rolls her eyes would give people the impression of a small animal like a chipmunk instead of a mini tank.

22 year old Mihiro was only deployed to Londo Bell for half a year, and Riddhe, who graduated a year earlier, went to the mobile suit learning squad, so he was assigned here at the same time as her, and for the two of them, it was their first duty in their first ship. It’s been three years since the war with the remnants of Zeon in what people called ‘Char’s Counterattack’, and right now, even Londo Bell, which was meant to be an immediate response team, had not fought for a long time. Thus, there were quite a lot of people who didn’t have actual combat experience. Recently, the renegade organization called ‘Sleeves’ were starting to move, and had fought against several squads under Londo Bell. However, the <<Nahel Argama>>, which was on the outside, didn’t take part in the assault, thus, new cadres like Riddhe weren’t the only ones who couldn’t imagine the actual scenario.

“Real battle…since we have the hunters on board, it won’t be an exercise, I guess.”

“It’s troubling to have to fight secretly in a civilian space colony. <<Industrial 7>> has the school Anaheim Electronics runs, right?”

Mihiro said this as that student-like face of hers became gloomy. As he

saw that delicate Eastern skin of hers, Riddhe's thoughts became a little uncouth, and the lift reached the gravity area before opening. After saying goodbye to Mihiro who was heading to the bridge, Riddhe let his body float through the passage that looked like the axis of the rotating gravity area.

Once he landed on the gravity, the body that was captured by gravity creaked, and Riddhe felt like he was struck by dizziness. He grabbed the handle on the wall. Riddhe frowned as the blood in his body was being pulled down as he didn't feel well about that. He moved past the weapons personnel who came over from the cafeteria and entered another lift. The captain's room was at the lowest level in the inside wall, where the gravity was the strongest. After descending down the axis for another 50m, his body started to become heavier because of the zero gravity during the journey, which caused his body to expand.

In fact, the atmosphere in the captain's room was rather heavy too. After reporting and calling out 'excuse me', Riddhe walked into the captain's room, and immediately knew the reason.

The captain's room of the <<Nahel Argama>> had the operation room and the reception room. The reception room itself was a wide space that was more than 60 sq meters large. The ship was being expanded continuously to match the current mobile suit capacity needed. However, the basic amount of facilities needed wouldn't require that much space, which ended up allowing them to use as much space as they wanted to. Inside the reception room right now was captain Otto Midas leading the people in charge of the weapons and the navigation were here. However, they weren't the ones who made the presence in the room heavy. In contrast to the tired looking captain, there was a commander sitting on the opposite sofa, and there was an organization where everyone was dressed in suits—the dangerous 'guests' who were riding on this ship. They were the ones who made the reception area feel so heavy.

Such a heavy feeling made him remember about his 'family'. Once Riddhe entered the room, he immediately saw the mobile suit squadron leader, Norman Basilicok. He avoided the looks of the rest as he handed the documents over to the colonel. He wanted to immediately turn around and leave the room, but Commander Norm said, "I need to sign this. Please wait for a moment." Causing him to remain where he was.

Sitting at a corner of the L-shaped sofa and signing the nominal roll, Norm's face looked rather unhappy, and Captain Otto took off his cap, a rare feat for him. As they had to put on spacesuits in battle, the

space army wouldn't use military caps when riding in ships, but Otto would definitely wear the normal cap. This was to hide his reclining hairline, and it's an open secret in the ship. Some vicious mechanics would even say, "Does he even need to worry about being bald when he looks like that?"

"We're fine with ECOAS leading this battle."

Otto touched that head of his that was lacking in hair and broke the silence. The voice of a middle-ranked officer bemoaning matched his face that looked like an old uncle in a civilian factory.

"But Londo Bell also has what Londo Bell needs to do. At least tell us your objective…"

"That's classified. I personally have no rights to reveal this."

Sitting opposite Otto was the fierce commander, who answered without an expression. He was the leader of the ECOAS squad, Daguza Mackle. His straightened back and those sturdy thighs of his would make one wonder whether he could still maintain the same position even when someone takes the sofa away. No matter whether it's the stone-like expression or the sharp expression that would make anyone freeze, he does look like a man who could lead the hunters.

Commander Norm stopped his hand from flipping through the documents and stared at Daguza. Riddhe found that he was in a situation where he didn't want to face at all, as his straight body froze harder. As the leader of the counter-terrorist Special Forces, Daguza had handled much more covert missions. Compared to his expression, Otto, who was forced onto the Nahel Argama which no one wanted, lost out a lot. Norman and all the crew on the ship saw that the captain was losing out a lot, and were obviously looking outraged. However, Daguza didn't really pay much attention to these stares. Riddhe was right in the middle of the epitome of a messy situation.

"But this is to be held in a civilian space colony. At least make some explanation to reduce the causalities to the minimum…"

"That's why I'm allowed to come along."

Otto manned up his pride as a captain and spoke, and the one who interrupted him was one of the men dressed in suits beside Daguza. Amongst the men dressed in traditional suits, there was a man who was wearing a collared Nehru Jacket. He placed the Nahel Argama model he was playing in his hand back onto the table and looked around at everyone.

“I’ll reveal this then. There’s a deal that’s about to take place in <<Industrial 7>>. The parties involved are the ‘Sleeves’ and the leader of the Vist Foundation.”

The man said as he smiled and relaxed his plump face. He was a ‘visitor’ that came along with Daguza and the ECOAS members, and the one with the largest profile. They only knew that he was an important member of Anaheim Electronics, and his name was Alberto. This man had an arrogant smile, and he seemed to be telling everyone that the authority over this entire battle is in him. Otto asked back, “Did you say Vist Foundation…” and at this moment, Norman and Daguza narrowed their eyes in unison as they gave unhappy looks.

“That’s right. On the surface, it’s a philanthropic foundation that transports art pieces into space colonies, but in fact, we control practically all of the Vist Foundation’s wealth and power. Though there’s a difference in the authority wielder, it’s the major stakeholder of our company here.”

With his back facing the Earth Celestial Sphere map on the wall, Alberto ignored the unhappy looks everyone gave.

“Of course, <<Industrial 7>> is our company’s asset. However, even if there’s some damage, we have to prevent the deal between the ‘Sleeves’ and the “Vist Foundation’. This isn’t Anaheim’s decision only, but also the conclusion the highest authorities of the Federation Army came to.”

His eyes with double eyelids made him look like he got a doll like face, but his demeanor and bulky frame really made it hard to tell his age. Though Anaheim Electronics was the largest military enterprise in the world, but for a civilian like Alberto to take part just because he was a crucial figure in this, for what reason did the highest authorities make such a decision? “What’s this…deal that we needed to prevent at all cost?” Captain Otto asked with a somewhat trembling voice.

“It’s the <<Laplace Box>>. The Vist Foundation intend to hand that thing over to the ‘Sleeves’.”

Immediately, the heavy damp air scattered all over, and Riddhe felt cold air blow through the reception room. “<<Laplace Box>>…?” Otto frowned.

“No one knows what that thing is, or even what’s inside. But one thing’s certain. Once the <<Laplace Box>> is opened, it would bring about the end of the Earth Federation government.”

Alberto leaned his back on the sofa as he gave a serious look. Captain

Otto tried to force a smile, but wasn't successful as his stiff expression started to ache in numbness. Daguza's sharp expression remained on Alberto.

"The Vist Foundation hid the <<Laplace Box>> and used that to preserve its wealth. Anaheim shares the same fate with it too. No matter what the aim is, we must stop the leader who lost his mind, if the thing that can topple the Federation government lands in the 'Sleeves' hands…things will become serious, captain."

Alberto said as he gave a self-mocking smile. Facing the doubts and fears everyone showed as they remained silent, Riddhe could only curse himself for meeting such an unlucky and unfortunate situation.

Part 3[edit]

No matter how one walked on the side of the corridor, there was the sound of a fist slamming into flesh. Marida Cruz let go of the moving handle and saw the back of Flaste Schole.

"IT'S BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T CHECK PROPERLY THAT WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT WE WERE USED AS TRANSPORT!"

Right in front of Flaste, who was roaring away, was a young deck crewman whose face was beaten till it was red and swollen. Under zero gravity, both of them had their feet stuck to the ground by magnets, so anyone who's hit would be hurting. Even if Flaste held back, that hard metal-like punch that can't be dodged landed straight on his face. The crewman swayed about and stood still, saying, "I won't give any excuses for this." While blood was dripping from his mouth.

"THAT'S JUST YOU TRYING TO ACT COOL! WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET ON YOUR KNEES AND APOLOGIZE!?"

Flaste grabbed the front of the crewman's hair and looked like he intended to deliver a few more punches. However, he was stopped by a voice "Stop fighting." Marida watched the human wall that was gathered on the passageway scatter, and Captain Zinnerman's bearded face appeared.

He sounded calm, but the expression hidden under the captain's hat showed utter distress. It's been an hour since they got a signal from the headquarters <<Palau>> that 'she' went missing. In the large Earth Celestial Sphere, the <<Palau>> itself would be a lone island in the large ocean. If she disappeared, it's likely that she would be hiding inside the ships that come in and goes out. After having checked the entire ship thoroughly, they found that one of the storerooms that was

used as a storeroom had signs of a stowaway inside, which caused a huge commotion in the ‘Garencieres’.

Marida herself joined in the search, but ‘her’ presence wasn’t inside the ship. It seemed that she slipped out during the mess when they docked. It was the crewman’s mistake for not noticing that she left, and he should be punched by Flaste, but everyone knew that they couldn’t solve the problem by getting angry. Marida ignored the men who were staring at each other and went into the cabin ‘she’ looked like ‘she’ was in.

She looked through the window on the wall and out to the central dock, closed her eyes and concentrated. She couldn’t grasp the presence of people moving about, and the messy thoughts that was like heat from a crowd caused her head to spin. Though she felt a little hot on the forehead, she couldn’t detect ‘her’ presence. There were too many people. Marida could only be amazed about how the human presences she could focus on in the battlefield could move about messily at will. As expected, an artificial being couldn’t detect a specific presence—

“She’s inside this space colony…but it’s not good if we take action and get held at ransom by our trade partner.”

Zinnerman said outside the entrance. Marida wiped away the sweat on her hands that came out unknowingly and returned back to the corridor.

“Is it likely that the ‘girl’ made contact with the other party already?”

“It’s likely that ‘she’ was opposed to this right from the beginning. Most likely, she made contact with Vist Foundation…”

Once Flaste pushed the crewman aside and finished saying that, Gilboa Sant continued on. Zinnerman watched his two henchmen, said “Not really” and put on his captain’s hat.

“It’s impossible to make contact with the outside world from Palau. She most likely intends to make direct contact!”

Most likely, she wanted to prevent the deal of the <<Laplace Box>>. Zinnerman let air flow through his hair that’s linked to his beard and put on the old captain’s hat. His eyes showed bitterness and pride. During these past years, he put in his heart and soul to protect ‘her’, and to this man who viewed himself as her substitute guardian, he may be able to judge that ‘she’ would do this, and this was somewhat of a self-defeat feeling. Marida was thinking as such, but decided firmly that she didn’t understand this, and looked away from her master who looked somewhat old now.

She only knows one thing, and that is, this is a huge crisis that would bring about danger to the entire organization. If they lose her, the ‘Sleeves’ will lose their focal point, and the organization they were finally able to build will develop cracks. If she even ends up in the Federation’s hands, the problem wouldn’t be only about the organization called the ‘Sleeves’. It may even bring everything to an immediate halt, the 16 years of war—or even the struggle that originate about half a century ago. All the sacrifice, blood, sweat that were shed for this would lose all meaning. The ‘Sleeves’ and the members of the <<Garencieres>> will lose their support.

‘She’, who was really smart, couldn’t possibly not understand this. This was foolish…but as she thought this, Marida felt that doing this would fit ‘her’ nature, and thus she stopped thinking. No matter whether it was about ‘her’ or the ‘Sleeves’, all the necessary decisions were to be made by her master, and she only needed to obey. The more she thinks, the more she would hesitate when carrying out the order. It’s something an ordinary person would normally do. After using this logical thinking process of hers, Marida gave Zinnerman a look that showed that she was waiting for instructions.

“Please, Marida. That child doesn’t know about normal life, so she wouldn’t be too far off. She’ll probably leave clues behind.”

Perhaps sensing the stare over at him, Zinnerman looked over at her and said this. This was the minimum transmission of talking and breathing, the familiar voice of her master. After answering ‘understood’ simply, Marida left the scene. After hearing Flaste’s voice “Don’t create any commotion” from behind, Marida took the lift and head towards the bridge area.

The <<Garencieres>>, which had a vertical landing function, has the end of the ship as the floor when it lands; which made it look like a building, and the bridge at the front of the ship was at the highest level. While they’re docked with the port now, the floor inside the ship that’s parallel to the port is lying horizontally. The lift itself is moving horizontally, but under zero gravity, the scenery around would decide how it looked. Marida ‘ascended’ by about the equivalent of 10 levels and entered the bridge. She then entered the bottom of the bridge—or rather—the back—where the server room was. In this small room that’s filled with communication equipment and screens, the crewman continued to stare at the screen all this while, and the sound of the keyboard being typed on never stopped.

Besides the colony news network that anyone could read, they could see the construction progress of <<Industrial 7>>, the blueprint and

even the movement of the industrial workers. As they could use the network provided by the port while they were docked and connect to the colony's network, a highly skilled hacker could check out a large amount of information. After plucking away the coffee tube from the air, Marida asked "How is it?" and the crewman didn't look back as he tossed a printed paper over. What's printed on it was the hottest selling news at the moment.

"A mini mobile suit was forced to land in the park. The student who used it insisted that he used it to save someone…is it?"

The sound of things piecing together rang in her mind. Marida looked at the time the news was broadcasted, and confirmed that the time was already past 9. She held onto the printed paper and left the server room.

Part 4[edit]

"…As described above, the One Year War ended at the large scale battle at A Baoa Qu. After that, the Principality of Zeon transferred control over to the new republic and signed a peace treaty, and where is the lunar city where the peace treaty was signed? Banagher Links?"

Fidgeting around and passing through the back of the classroom, Banagher was about to sit down at his seat, but was called out by his teacher, Mr Bancroft, and was immediately stunned.

"Yes. Um, that…'Von Braun'?"

"It's 'Granada'." *BAM*. After slamming the desk and correcting it, Mr Bancroft adjusted his glasses in an unhappy manner. "I heard about everything. Sit down."

What's going on? Banagher muttered inside his heart as he sat at a corner of the fan-shaped table. Takuya and the other students gave him looks as he plugged his laptop into the power port at the table. He opened out the retractable keyboard, entered his log in ID, and the world history definition that he missed out was shown on the screen.

It's said that the advance in technology in the old century and the wireless network system weren't rare at all—an age where even handphones could be carried along—right now, the network and phones were all wired. That's because as humans are living in human colonies, such 'intricate technology', there's a strict limit on the electric waves used. However, as there's Minovsky particles floating everywhere, the limit became meaningless. These Minovsky particles that were of unknown origin causes electric short circuits of all types to happen often. Although there were many protective measures for life

support systems, it's a habit after the One Year War to print a copy of data out.

In other worlds, this Earth Celestial Sphere still had Minovsky particles floating about after the war. To put it plainly, there's still a need for it—war continues to happen. Banagher suddenly thought about this and felt that his neck was aching a little like it was twisted. Of course, it need not be a real battle. Particles were also scattered for battle training. Recently, it's said that even trading ships would scatter the particles to deal with pirates. Some of them would definitely float over from a real battlefield, right? Maybe at this moment, someone's betting his life and gets burned by a laser. Just like how he saw a mobile suit this morning amongst them remains.

"A war. There'll be a large-scale war again."

The jade-colored eyes flashed through his mind as those words rang beside his ears. Banagher shook his head that was still swirling and gathered his concentration on the history lecture.

"The Principality of Zeon was a military country that was controlled by the Zabi family. The Zeonism that Zeon Deikum promoted described that humans in space shall bring a brand new 'Newtype thinking', and garnered lots of supporters like Gihren Zabi. It wasn't Deikum's own intent, but after he died, his name was used by the Zabi family as an excuse for a war of independence. In a certain sense, it was still a dangerous thought."

Someone could actually say such words even though it's not knowledge derived from their own experience. How does it feel? Seeing Mr Bancroft continue to talk away, he wondered as a chat window appeared in the corner of his laptop.

This was to be expected. He was the one who caused an uproar in the entire colony by uprooting a cable on the road. How would the other students who weren't motivated let this off? Banagher impatiently pressed the button and let the chat window appear on his monitor.

"Master Icarus. How does it feel to be investigated by the police?"

Most likely, Takuya was asking on behalf of the entire class. "Icarus?" Banagher asked back, and then, there was a link to a webpage. Banagher clicked on the link to check.

It was the front page of the 'Daily 7' news that Anaheim Electronics run. Banagher saw the photo of the Torohachi in the lawn and the headline 'The Icarus that challenged the Artificial sun sadly fell onto the park', and immediately turned off the webpage.

He felt the students around him all holding back their laughter as they looked at him. “Am I wrong to save someone?” Banagher answered.

“I heard that the person you saved disappeared like smoke.” “What did the police say about you using a mini-mobile suit on your own and wrecking property?” “What about the college?” The students asked, and Banagher used one hand to support his face and he typed with one hand.

“The surveillance camera of the maintenance system captured the image of the girl, so it was deemed that I did save someone. I was given a severe verbal warning and acquitted of charges. From the way the counseling teacher came to get me from the police, it seems that I don’t have too much problems with the school, but I have to head to the principal’s office after school.”

The male students, who made up about 70% of the class, started to get excited and tap away at their keyboard “A girl!?” “Age, looks?” “What did you talk about?” “Where did she come about?”…On seeing the screen seemingly come to life, Banagher entered, “I don’t know. The police are still looking for her.” At this moment, the sound of the lecture desk rang throughout the classroom.

“You people. Don’t think that you can slack around just because it seems that history isn’t so useful to your work. Anaheim won’t hire idiots who can’t even pass a high school standard. Don’t just stupidly believe that they will hire all you people!”

Mr Bancroft used his ultimate technique, and the students immediately closed their chat windows and looked back at the podium. The reason why vocations were quickly switched was because the vocational students know that their future jobs will lie in the teachers’ hands. Banagher sighed and focused on the lecture screen. The One Year War, the Gryps War, the two Neo Zeon wars. As he looked at the boring timeline, Banagher couldn’t get rid of those jade green eyes spinning in his dizzy mind.

The bright eyes he saw several hours ago; the soft touch when he hugged her together with both hands; everything just felt so distant, so vague that it feels like he was seeing another person’s memory. Even Banagher himself couldn’t dare to believe that he stole a mini mobile suit to save her. He didn’t think that he would have such a reckless impulse. Why did he do this? Who was she?

As it was close to noon, there was a bright sunlight outside the classroom window. At the field in front of the vocation building, there were mini mobile suits that were used for training lined up over there,

moving equipment that's to be used for training. Opposite there was a stack of trapezoid layers of the school campus that was designed with the Coriolis' Effect of the colony's self-rotation in mind. And far over on the other side, there's a large wall that showed the end of a space colony—the materials were still exposed to the airtight wall facing the moon. As it was blocked by the light of the artificial sun, it's import to see the entire mortar-like war, but there's a hatch in the center that's connected to the colony builder, and right now, there should be equipment that's to be used for building colonies that's being moved in and out.

The colony builder collects the debris that's floating around in the Dark Wasteland region and start to purify, refine and build <<Industrial 7>>. That's the redevelopment plan of the Dark Wasteland region, often called the experimental phase of the 'Frontier Project'. In other words, this colony was built from the debris of past wars, and the colony builder was a magic funnel that uses this junk to build a 'world'—and because of the shape, this large facility was given the nickname <<Snail>>. Banagher couldn't help but concentrate on this seemingly blurry airtight wall.

That was the thing that built the space colony, this 'world'. She said that she had to go there, that there's someone she had to meet. For what? To prevent a war?

"After the war, organizations that called themselves the remnants of Zeon created lots of conflict. They called for space migrants to be self-independent, pushed for Ere-ism, and viewed Earthnoids as enemies. However, don't forget the Newtype thinking in the republic that maybe people saw. That's why colonies and meteors were thrown down to Earth. It's unknown how many people sacrificed their lives because of this, and as citizens of the Federation who follow the idea of democracy, we…"

Another voice rang through his ears, covering the voice of Mr Bancroft who sounded more and more agitated. *"How spineless…!" Who cares about you,* Banagher argued back at the girl in his mind.

It has nothing to do with me. No, I can't possibly be involved in this. Whether it's this One Year War or the second Neo Zeon War 3 years ago—the so-called 'Char's Counterattack', all these has nothing to do with me. That's just something I only saw through the television screen, what happened in a far away world. It's the same for all the students here and Mr Bancroft here too!

If there were countless billions of people who were sacrificed in the war, then including those that survived, it's our job to rebuild Earth and

develop. The commotion during the One Year War brought about the unification, and babies who were born after the war like Banagher grew up listening to these adults. Thus, even if there's people trying to start a space migrant independence or even start a large scale war because of this, it basically has nothing to do with them. It's only that they would feel uneasy about hearing that some colony got wrecked because of war, but one could think that the chances of it was like being hit by a huge meteor. They were too unlucky, and could just treat it as other people's business and forget about this. Movements of independence were just what people who to vent their depression as they weren't able to get used to society. The stand that 'lucky children who don't know about war' will never change, and it's undoubted that tomorrow would be the same as today.

That girl was about the same age as he was, but the way she said 'war' had a different force from what the teacher said. It's like a membrane covering a greenhouse breaking apart, and a strong gust of wind blew in. It's also like a black spot that appears in an overly bright space, and then the shadow of the entire world appeared—

"Our company allows every factory to be independent financially. Thus, a group of uncouth people accepted the orders from Neo Zeon, causing both ally and enemy to have machines made from Anaheim. Thus, people would view Anaheim as death merchants. However, do not forget that the people in charge will be punished too…"

Then, I, who's attending Anaheim Electronics Industrial College, am already part of war. Thinking about this thing that he had never thought about before, Banagher's brain suddenly remembered the pure white color of the mobile suit he saw this morning outside the subway train window, and felt bothered by his far-fetched thinking.

The unicorn that cut through the vacuum dragged its white afterimage of its mobile suit like it was soaring in space. It flew towards the <<Snail>>, the creator of this world, the place where the colony builder was at, where normal people were forbidden from entering. If that girl was correct, that place would be the most critical place where the 'war' will be associated with.

Something was about to happen. No, maybe it had already happened, it's just that he only saw part of it. It's like a curtain was drawn right in front of his eyes. Banagher again looked outside the window, saw the airtight wall that was filled with an unknown thing, and felt something in his heart throbbing. Mr Bancroft's voice that was becoming more excited moved the air.

"4 years from now, in Universal Century year 100, the Republic of

Zeon shall give up on its self-independence and will be drafted back into the Federation as Side 3. When the country in the name of Zeon is destroyed, Zeonism shall fall, and humanity will be united again. Just like how our grandfathers or fathers continued to exist for Earth and humanity to create this united government called this Earth Federation after so many tribulations. To inherit such a great legacy and let the Earth Celestial Sphere continue to develop, you young ones…"

Part 5[edit]

"Idiot, treating such words as well. That girl must be someone who's enthusiastic about activity, thinking that the capitalist Earth is all evil and sort. That's why she must be going over to Chairman Cardeas Vist."

Puffing her slightly brown face, Micott Bartsch simply said this. Banagher kicked aside Haro lightly while it was shouting 'idiot, idiot', and uneasily drank up his remaining coffee.

Studying in the private high school beside Anaheim Electronics, Micott's dress code and verbal mannerisms were all a lot more free than the vocational school, and she wouldn't even hesitate about entering other people's schools. She came over to the vocational school to discuss about the night's party during lunch break, and when Banagher tried to explain what happened in the morning, that was the answer she gave.

The reality the girl said was the best weapon to deal with a boy who wanted to do something and was being all pumped up. Dressed in a hooded coat and shorts, Micott raised her leg as she sat on the bench, and Banagher avoided her gaze and said, "The chairman, as in, of our vocational school?" He tried to avoid the thought that this may be true, and anyway, even if there was nothing he could say, he had to find something to say.

"That's right. There's a photo when you entered the school, right? Cardeas Vist, the largest stakeholder of Anaheim Electronics, also known as the second generation leader of the Vist Foundation that was the secret owner."

"That person lives inside the <<Snail>>?"

That girl said that there was 'someone she had to meet no matter what'. On hearing the term 'secret owner', Banagher's heart started to pulsate. However…

"Idiot, how could such a big hotshot stay in such a rural space colony? The chairman's just a title to him. He never even appeared in the

graduation ceremonies before."

Sitting beside Micott, Takuya put down the magazine he read halfway through and interrupted. That was the robot related monthly magazine he would regularly buy, and there was a photo of a mini mobile suit tournament on the cross-pages picture.

"But it seemed that he really has a house here! It's said that the house was directly moved over from Earth. Even the <<Snail>> was said to be Vist Foundation's property."

Micott's father was the factory owner of the 3rd Industrial area, so she would often hear about such underground news. The factory owner over here in <<Industrial 7>> could be said to be like a mayor in the States, and even though Micott was a rich princess who's studying in a private school, she would continue to come over to this vocational school where the smell of grease was thick. Maybe its because this space colony was supported by the industry. She herself even said that 'the boys in our school are boring, all spineless princes'.

"But isn't the colony builder managed by the colony builder management? Why is it that there's rumors of it being the Foundation's personal property?" / "That's because the colony builder management had some members of the Vist Foundation, right?"

"The rich ones are really different. Launching an entire house into space, that's crazy."

Takuya looked like he didn't have any other thoughts as he said what he wanted and continued to read his magazine. An open secret's really scary, so scary that it can numb a person's sense for the strange, Banagher thought. However, he himself never heard of the name of Vist Foundation. Was it because he was transferred in midway through, or was it that he was too dazed for a long time? Banagher really couldn't tell which was the reason, and he looked through the trees in the school as he wondered what happened to the girl.

Anaheim Electronics wasn't just the largest military producer in the Earth Celestial sphere, but there's a house for the sponsor in the <<Snail>>. It's no wonder that the crazy radicals will rush in to kill just to oppose war. In fact, there's a lot of terror attacks on Anaheim every way, and it's said that there's a lot of expenses on safety. Even if the chairman of the Institute was just an open title, even Micott knew about the relationship between the Vist Foundation and Anaheim. It's likely that this leader may be attacked.

However, the girl's eyes made Banagher feel that things weren't that

simple. She had a strong will, but those eyes weren't the eyes of a fanatic. It's different from all the people he met till now. Those jade-green eyes had a strong allure to them—

"The police is looking for her? You better not get involved with this. If the army gets hold on this, you might not even have a job."

Perhaps reading through his own thoughts, Micott said the absolute truth and ended the current conversation before looking over at Takuya. "Speaking of which, tonight's party…" Banagher wasn't interested in this topic and took Haro away before leaving.

Do you think I don't know about all of this? On one hand, he felt really angry, but on the other hand, his rationale side had to admit that Micott was right. His emotions that were being built up inside was forming a vortex inside him. It's better not to get involved with her, and I know that. At the police's side, he may be questioned hard by the police, and also by those executives in suits. Most likely, they would be public security personnel. *If they're eyeing me, my path to Anaheim will always be closed, and I may even be expelled from school and return back to the old colony of Side 1.*

The old city Banagher grew up in was the first of the space colonies that were built, and was at a corner where it was past its durability use. Other than old residents, there were refugees from war, people with unemployment and frustrated activists who were practically useless and had to rely on others. It was a small town where the circumstances were really bad, where the public drainage were often so bad that stench would always come out from it. Both mother and son seemed like they were fleeing from the sights of the world as they moved to his hometown, and it was the best place to live in for someone with no place to go. He also had the money his mother left behind, and he should be able to continue living on. However, there's no future in that town.

Then, what about here? He intended to continue relying on this father of his who he had never met before and join the bottom rungs of the enterprise, but there wasn't anything really different, nothing that he hasn't seen. He didn't have a goal, had no interests, and just felt 'disjointed' as the days pass. Does this mean that he had no future—he continued to be pressured by the swirling thoughts, and just when he quickly moved past the door, he heard a clear and refreshing voice "Are you Banagher Links?". Banagher stopped.

There was an electric car parked on the road in front of the school gate, and a woman was standing right in front of it. The woman was wearing a fitting coat and tight skirt, and her long hair was tied behind

her. She lifted her head and straightened her back, and one could tell from afar that she had a good figure that resembled a secretary of a large company. However, her face didn't have any make up to make her look younger. Even though one could feel that she would fit into the school with just her appearance, the impression would change when they look into her eyes.

The emotionless blue eyes made it hard to tell whether she was focusing on him. The dark blue eyes that would remind one of the deep seas on earth made it look like there were two holes in front of her eyes. Banagher started to have goosebumps and picked Haro up from beside his feet. At this moment, the woman passed through the gate and said "That's good. I have a question I want to ask you," as she approached. She was wearing a business suit, but Banagher realized that she was wearing sports shoes underneath.

"Can you please tell me what did the person you saved this morning say?"

The woman merely showed a smile, and behind her, two men got off the electric car. Both of them were dressed really casually, but their expressions and looks didn't look friendly at all. Banagher felt that his hands which were holding onto Haro were sweating and asked back, "Are you the police?" The media didn't reveal his name, and these people didn't look like reporters. That robotic smile the woman gave didn't change as she answered with silence.

Banagher felt that the air around him went cold as his knees were trembling. Something's not right with these people. They had the same stench as of those frustrated activists in his hometown—those who were already used to violence. He looked away and backed off, "I told all I should say to the police." He quickly said that and wanted to get back into the school. Immediately, his shoulder was grabbed from behind, and the foot that was about to step out missed the ground.

"Just say the same thing you said to them. We won't do anything else then."

The hand that was grabbing onto the shoulder didn't let go as her blue eyes closed in while she continued on. The force wasn't great, but his body still couldn't move. It felt like he would be taken down if he tried to struggle. Banagher just felt that this action was of someone who was extremely skilled and forced out a hoarse voice, "What do you mean by that…" and the woman whispered to him, "You don't want to be involved in trouble, right?" and exerted even more strength in her grip.

There was a sharp pain in his neck, and he let out a cry before he

could endure it. His upper body couldn't help but twist, and Haro dropped off his numbed fingertips. Banagher couldn't breathe normally as he moved the only free eye. There weren't any students nearby, and there weren't any signs of the old guard beside the gate. These two men were standing behind the woman and creating a blind spot. He wanted to cry out, but his abdomen couldn't exert force, and he could only let his sights move about before seeing those blue eyes again.

It was killing intent. The term that matched her blue hole-like eyes accompanied this chilling fact as it went down Banagher's body. Unlike those activists who lost their way, these men were professional. They knew how to wreck a human body, they were soldiers—people who would use violence without hesitation if necessary. Just when he thought about this, he heard the woman say "Where did 'she' go?" Banagher inadvertently said out carelessly "The <<Snail>>…"

"The <<Snail>>?" the woman asked back as she exerted even more force. The pain that was added on struck Banagher as he answered, "The, the colony builder!"

"She said that she had someone she wanted to meet and talk with…"

He spoke too much. Just when Banagher felt that despair the moment he let out his voice, the pain suddenly vanished, and his body that regained its freedom took a few steps back. Banagher finally managed to support his knees and turned over to look at the woman who had already turned around. The two men who followed her from behind quickly left the school gate as if they weren't looking at Banagher at all.

"You can't possibly get over to the <<Snail>>…! It's forbidden there. There's also construction areas all around. You can't even get over there!"

Banagher held his aching shoulder and shouted out unhappily. The woman stopped, and the beige hair that had a bit of orange was moved by the wind as she used those emotionless blue eyes to stare at Banagher.

"I'll remember that. Thank you, Banagher-kun."

It was a tone that was without compassion nor arrogance, which made Banagher feel all the more humiliated. The woman just took the electric car and left with the men. Banagher used his last ounce of courage to run out of the school gate and glared at the electric car that was gradually moving away. The electric car took a turn at the road beside the school and immediately went missing. Obviously, they were

headed towards the Industrial area.

That girl was chased by people, and they weren't the people—but more like guerillas who were like soldiers. "A war will happen." "There's still time to stop it." Voices like this accompanied the weight of the current situation as they echoed in his head. However, Banagher didn't think of what to do at this moment. He felt even more guilty that he succumbed to violence and let out those words.

Having stayed in the old city that was like a slum, Banagher developed a resistance to violence. He had a belief that if he had to fight or hide, he would be stronger than an ordinary boy. But the fact was that right now, he was no different from a child. He just said everything out loud just to avoid pain. He knew that this would bring about danger to the girl, but he couldn't even muster a lie in his mind—no, he was just that spineless.

"I'm really…weak."

He remembered those jade green eyes that had some anxiety in them. 'How spineless'. The words echoed in his heart. Banagher gripped his fists hard and couldn't help but run out.

At this moment, he didn't even have the rationale mindset to think about his future as his body went hot from the impulse of trying to make up for his own mistake. Banagher and Haro, which caught up, went to the nearest electric car park.

Part 6[edit]

Having come all the way here, one would really feel that Industrial 7 was really a space colony that was being built.

The block that was completed was only 20km long, and right in front of it was the colony builder unit <<Wheels>>, and the inside was 3.2km long and 1.6km wide. The construction area was divided into 4 parts. One of the land cabled structures has 4 territorial blocks that's being built, and these were lined together without much any bumps. There're 6 of these land cable structures that surround all 360 degrees on the inside of the wall of the space colony. This scene itself wasn't just a congruent sight itself, but one would realize that if they peel off this foil of artificial earth, they would just be living in a cylinder. It's a barren and lonely sight.

For the past 10 years, she had been to many places, including Earth, but she had never seen a space colony that was being built on the inside. As she stood in front of wire mesh that separated her from inside, the girl didn't look bored as she looked at the large builder unit.

The large unit builder was a large metal frame that was about the same as the area block. The lines that run on the rail were moving about, fastening the area block that was under construction, and the fully automatic machines will finish off the area blocks that they were supposed to construct. Simply put, these were extremely large industrial machines, the basis of the land making process.

Based on the information on the mesh wire, a construction would take about a week. The first construction will move onto the second one, and the second one will move onto the third one. It will move all the lines on the area blocks to be completed systematically as it progresses, and it will move back once the fourth construction was complete to the first construction. This was the day when the final construction will be completed, and the other side of the wire mesh look busy. Work vehicles and cars with supervising civil servants would move about to and fro. Once the construction group back off, a new 'land' will be completed, so the district office itself would be busy. They had to check the name of the area according to the city's plan, and also check the electric cables and the underground sewage. There were a whole lot of things they had to do.

The land builder units would back away in all 6 lines and return back to the start. The wheel itself would back away too. In other words, the colony will increase in length by 1.6km. At that time, the colony itself would let a siren and get ready for a slight tremor that would coming with the growth. However, what would be the scene of 6 builder units rolling at the same time when they're more than 3km long and about the height of 25 levels? Just thinking about it alone made it exciting, but right now, the current situation wouldn't allow for her to sightsee leisurely. She looked away from the high builder unit and looked at the construction gate that's between the wire mesh fence.

Though there were guards, the security wasn't strict. Maybe vehicles could sneak in here. However, there was a problem. She didn't know what the builder unit looked like, and even if she passed through it, there were still 3 blocks of area blocks that were under construction. She didn't feel that she could walk 6km into this construction area without being discovered, and especially when there was the commotion this morning, it's likely that the police may be watching them.

The girl looked up at the artificial sun that was shining through the clouds. She wondered if she could walk over through there. It's impossible to see from here when the land builder was blocking, but the artificial sun that passes through the space colony would extend out to the airtight wall on the other side where the moon was, and it

would form part of the basis of the gantry linking to the colony builder. The gantry would often let out construction materials and dust as cranes would then move these materials to the construction site. Thus, it should be easy to sneak in through the artificial sun.

And since this path is inaccessible, she could only move through the construction area if she wanted to get near the colony builder. The girl again looked at the gate of the construction site. As she noticed the cars and the guards who were busy dealing with them, *kyururu*…her stomach rumbled.

She immediately looked around. Luckily, there wasn't anyone nearby. Even if there were though, the sounds of cars moving through would overpower it so much that it couldn't be heard. However, she still felt herself blushing unknowingly. The girl hasn't ate for more than half a day, and wondered how she was actually able to be hungry at this moment. But on the other hand, she could understand the importance of eating. The girl sighed. She should have taken some dry food when she left the Garancieres, but it was now too late to regret about this.

She was thirsty too, and in this situation, her concentration will drop. Also, it'll be easy for someone to spot her if she remained in the same place for a long time. The girl left the scene and headed towards the Industrial area in the street construction block. On the way, she went by a large trailer that had lots of mini mobile suits on, which caused her face to be covered with dust that flew off the road. At this moment, she suddenly remembered about that boy she met in the morning, his presence.

The boy who desperately reached his hand out of the mobile suit cockpit to save her life while she was floating in the air seemed to be an ordinary citizen. *How was he able to do that? What happened to him after that? I should have at least thanked him…*

Part 7[edit]

To ease the stress of being hidden in a sealed space, the space colony had routes that were designed to be part of the city's plan. One of them was the commercial area that was right beside the construction area. The thin and long path had shops littered on both sides of the road, and each of the shops were set up to their ideal image, causing the street to look like those remaining shopping streets in those old cities on Earth. The back of the short roofs had builder units that were like hills, and clouds that covered the airtight wall facing the moon. The area just felt like a rural town.

It was 1pm, and all the eateries were no longer packed with workers.

The shopping streets entered a time of relaxation. She snuck in between some old people and some housewives with children and continued walking down the street. There were bakeries, bookstores, customer service shops and eateries. At times, there would be the smell of hot dogs or oily Chinese food coming out from the messy row of streets. Though she could drink from the water cooler in the park when she's thirsty, her empty stomach couldn't be filled, and if she let her guard down, it would rumble again, which would make it embarrassing.

However, she was more worried about the housewives who were walking by and glancing at her. She had firm belief that she wasn't caught on camera by the port's surveillance camera, so nobody would suspect that she was the one involved in the incident this morning. Or maybe her clothing was rather strange for the people here? She checked on the internet for the latest fashion trend before she left for Palau and tried her best not to choose the most outstanding one. As she looked at herself through a glass window on a cupboard in a shop, the girl wondered whether it was because she buttoned up her collar. However, she didn't want to open her collar so randomly, so she started working again.

She made preparations before, but there would be lots of trouble when it came to reality. To her, who never carried money or credit cards before, she didn't know that she couldn't buy bread without having money as it was not part of her knowledge. Thus, she made the mistake of running out without taking the money. I really don't understand social rules—the girl thought as she felt even more depressed. She had no experience of going out alone. Speaking of which, she did watch a romantic movie about a princess in a small country who slipped out onto the streets for a day of happiness. It was an old century film. The story was ordinary, but the actress who acted as a princess who did not know anything was really charismatic, and it was a movie she really liked. What was the name of that actress?

Thinking about it hard, the girl suddenly realized that she was seriously thinking of the actress' name. She abandoned the useless dream behind her. The princess in the movie was just leaving a boring duty, but she had something she had to do. Ever since they knew that she was opposed to this deal, Zinnerman didn't reveal anything more about this deal to her. Thus, she wasn't certain when the interaction with Vist Foundation would be held, and where. However, some of the other crew members said that it would begin at evening, and it'll be too late for her if she continued to laze around. Palau should have found out that she was missing. She had to be faster—the girl left the shopping

street, entered a complicated alley, and found a van parked in a dead end.

She looked at the van that was filled with metal filings, and thought that it would be impossible to get on. She then looked over at the driver's seat. She didn't want to use this method, but would it be possible to talk to the driver and let him help transport her into the construction area? She could say that she wanted to get closer to see the colony being built. If she's successful, she could even get inside the area builder. If she could get in and understand the rough situation…

Suddenly, she felt a stare from behind. It's like someone who had been prone suddenly lifting its face, a stare that was full of intent. Her body unknowingly tensed up, but she didn't make the mistake of turning around carelessly. The girl quickly turned around a corner, but there was a man who blocked his way on the alley, causing her to stop.

The man was dressed in a short coat, and his cap was kept low. The girl recognized his face. He was a member of the Garencieres. The girl intended to leave the alley before the man walked over, but two people were standing at the exit of the alley, blocking her escape.

The exhaust fan from the restaurant pumped out greasy smoke, and the alley only had dirty trash bins fallen about as there was no one else around. Knowing that she had nowhere to go, the girl hid her uneasy feeling as she faced the two people who blocked her getaway. She didn't think of why she was discovered. She knew that the crew of the Garancieres could do this.

And if Marida joined in the search—the girl pulled about 3m away as she stared at Marida. Marida was wearing an office suit as a disguise, yet it couldn't hide her ominous presence. The girl knew that she would be immediately caught at such a distance, and used her eyes to tell Marida not to be rude. Marida's expression showed a shift, and one could tell that she was wavering,

"Let's head back, princess."

Feeling that little wavering in herself, Marida said, "The captain's worried about you."

"I don't want to."

"Please consider your position. If you're discovered by the Federation at such a place, who knows what would happen…"

She stepped forward while wearing the sports shoes. Even if the disguise wasn't perfect, it's really Marida's style not to wear high heels.

“It’s because I thought of this that I did it.” The girl used a tone that fit her ‘position’ and prevented Marida from moving forward.

“Right now, we can’t use the ‘Laplace Box’. No matter what kind of thing it is, Full Frontal will only use it as a tool and start a meaningless conflict. You should know that, right?”

“I don’t understand. I just listen to orders.”

“You’re lying. You’re just escaping. The ‘power’ that was given to you normally shouldn't be used in such a way.”

The girl didn’t just say this randomly. Marida, who would blindly listen to Zinnerman’s orders and never faced her own life—showed wavering in her blue eyes again and looked away from the girl, but the ominous presence on her body didn’t subside. Marida recollected her expressionless look as she looked over, “Princess…pardon me for my rudeness.”

With such a signal, the crew member standing behind put his hand on the girl’s shoulder. He did control his strength, but the skilled move wasn’t something that could be shaken off whenever anyone wanted to. The girl saw Marida and the other crew member close in and shouted, “How rude! Let go of me!” as she continued to struggle. At this moment, a loud alarm suddenly rang throughout the entire alley.

The sound was so loud that it probably didn’t just ring through the alley, but also possibly through the road. Even Marida was stunned as she looked around. The girl saw the crew member beside her reach for a gun in his chest, and the force on her shoulder was weakened. She used this chance to struggle hard and escaped from his grasp.

The girl dodged past the hand Marida reached out with for the first time and went around the corner. Amidst the siren, she could hear Marida call out “Princess…!”. However, the girl continued to run. She turned around several corners, went through a narrow alley, and was aiming for a main street with people on it. However, the girl soon lost her way, and as she looked around at a crossroad, someone suddenly grabbed her on the wrist from beside her.

The soft hand was different from Marida and the rest. The familiar feeling appeared through the girl’s mind as she even forgot to struggle and looked at the owner of the hand. That was the face of the person who saved her from impasse.

The head that was full of sweat and the dark brown eyes were staring at the girl’s eyes. Why…? The girl thought, and then heard the boy’s shout, “Over here!” The girl was pulled away by the hand. She ran

from behind, and the ball-shaped robot beside the foot started to roll. The noisy alarm suddenly stopped. It seemed that this mascot-like robot was the one that made the sound.

The boy pulled the girl along in this narrow alley and continued to run through complicated alleys without hesitation. The girl was certain that he was that boy through the robot and the deep blue jacket on him, and continued to follow him and run. It may be careless for her to follow a stranger, but right now, she couldn't allow herself to be caught by Marida. The boy who seems familiar with this place is leading, so let's have him lead. The girl continued to run between the gaps of the packed houses.

Also, the hands of this boy were easing themselves to prevent hurting her and yet grabbing tightly so and not letting go. She was helped by a lot of hands before, but the girl never grabbed such a hand that grabbed onto hers firmly and without hesitation. It was unexpectedly soft too; it had the weakness of young age as it was tightly sticking to her skin.

I was saved by these hands twice. Who is this boy? At this moment, the girl forgot that she was being pursued and seriously looked at the back of the boy.

Part 8[edit]

The self-defense alarm system inside Haro actually worked in such an unexpected manner. While sweating and holding onto the girl's hand, Banagher moved through the alleys of the shopping area.

Banagher hadn't come to the construction site only one or twice, so he had roughly remembered the entire place. He just needed to head over to the distribution center to verify the vehicle license plate that terrifying woman and the rest used and confirm their location. It wouldn't be too difficult for him to take the initiative. Banagher intended to use the complicated alleys to shake off their pursuers, that is, if they weren't caught in the process.

He first heard the breath of the girl behind her. Then, it was Haro, who was bouncing like a ball as its body was of strengthened plastic with an enhanced layer of rubber. Haro used the spring inside its frame to jump, and as the center maintains the movement, it couldn't turn right immediately. After turning around a few times, Banagher picked up Haro, put it in a gap that's 50cm wide between two houses, and used his expression to call the girl over. He thought that she would hesitate for a while, but the girl actually followed Banagher and entered the gap.

The gap was so small that he had to tilt himself sideways just to walk through. After walking through it, they used the piled up garbage for footing to climb up the walls. Then, they continued to move down through a corridor in the air near the roofs. A granny who was watching television inside a window turned around in surprise. A stray cat was scared away by this sudden intruder, and someone angrily shouted, “WHO’S THAT BRAT!” While stepping on the cheap plastic roofs, Banagher continued leap off them, and the girl nimbly followed him as her purple shawl fluttered with the wind.

After moving for about 20m, the rows of roofs vanished, and a large space appeared in front of them. They arrived at the boundary of the commercial area and the industrial area. Normally speaking, the area was a road, but the houses here were built towards the wired fence. This was a screen that couldn’t be seen unless one deliberately looked from the ‘wide space’ where there’s deliberately no set up. Banagher checked that he reached the end of the cable like as planned, looked at the colony builder units that’s several hundred meters in front of him, and again turned to look at the landscape from a height of about 3 levels.

There’s a small pile of dirt beside the fence, and there’s no construction worker. Thinking about this, Banagher thought that this would be faster than climbing down the fence and turned to look at the girl. But before he could ask whether they should jump, the girl’s determined look was facing him as she jumped onto the pile of dirt. I lost to her…Banagher thought and carried Haro before jumping.

Banagher’s feet landed into the soft dirt and beside the girl. He climbed out from the pile of dirt that was at his chest level, spit out the dirt that entered his mouth, and saw that the girl who had already climbed out from here and slid down. They ran for a long distance, and those who don’t know the landscape wouldn’t know such a path. Banagher wanted to take a short breath and called the girl “Oi…”, but the girl stared sharply back and him and shouted, “HURRY UP!”

“MARIDA WILL CATCH UP TO US LIKE THIS!”

The girl’s jade-green eyes showed anxiety. It was really the expression of that girl. “Marida, as in that scary big sister?” The girl angrily growled back without answering Banagher’s question, “Hurry up!” and started to run off. Banagher climbed out from the pile of dirt and hurriedly followed behind.

He grabbed the hand of the girl who was intending to run to the outside of the builder area, said “Over here” and was about to pull her back, but immediately felt the girl gasp. He looked over at where she was

looking at, and found that it was the woman who went through the residential area and was standing on the layers of overlapping roofs. The pretty-looking woman called Marida was looking over. Her blue eyes narrowed to a fine line. The next moment, the feet with sports shoes on them stamped onto the ground, and the hair that was tied into a ponytail fluttered. Her body had easily leaped past the metal wire and the pile of dirt as she landed on the ground.

She was as nimble as a cat. “No way…” Banagher couldn’t believe it, and the girl grabbed his hand, shouting, “HURRY UP AND RUN!” Banagher pulled her hand and ran towards the builder unit. The pyramid-like large monorail track and the structure was like a hill. On seeing this structure that was so large that it occupied their line of sight, they ran to a workyard with construction materials and mini mobile suits.

“What should we do?”

“YOU WANT TO GET OVER TO THE ‘SNAIL’, RIGHT?”

Banagher roared as he answered the girl and saw the crowd that was scattering in front of the builder unit like ants. It’s about time for the colony to expand and the creation of new land. They were already moving through the workers that were moving back, and one of them who looked like the worker head shouted, “Oi! Who are you!” Banagher went by the man and got near to a slope near the monorail stop. Looking back, he saw Marida easily pushing aside the workers who were coming over, and they were less than 20m away. Banagher’s idea to stand up and adjust his breathing was gone as he desperately ran up the slope.

The mobile rail of the builder units—the monorail was located at a place 1.5 times the height of the units away, but 170m high. The construct that looked like a triangle from the front was set in front of both sides of the builder. And at the start, or the end, there’s a builder unit linked to the slope used for transportation. Banagher was climbing up this slope. In other words, if he continued to run up this slope to the top, he would reach the ceiling of the builder unit.

The ceiling was 25 levels high from the builder, and there're another few levels to the link point of the monorail. It's a slope where a cart could move, but it would be really tiring to run up about several hundred meters at one go. He panted quite a few times, but on the way there, his feet started to feel lighter, and it felt like the muscles on his waist seemed to be floating from his bones. That's because the further he was from the ground—the further off from the inside of the colony made the centrifuge force weaker.

There's no high-rise buildings inside the space colony, and one could tell that the centrifuge force could only be used for a height of about 5 or 6 levels. The higher he climbed, the more his body felt the weakening of gravity. Banagher felt that such physics laws was really useful for the first time as his running motion was like long jumping continuously. However, it would be the same for the pursuer as well. Marida kicked the slope with much more leg power and suddenly accelerated. Her hand reached the back of the girl, and only missed her shoulder by inches. However, she didn't mess up her rhythm as she continued to pull her distance close. She was just like a machine

that didn't know fatigue. *We can't run away, we'll be caught in the next second.* Getting ready for this, Banagher suddenly heard a deep-sounding alarm.

At the same time, the warning lights on both sides of the slope rang, and a slow tremor went through their legs. Banagher used all his strength to move his legs and pulled the girl over to him. Because of the tremor, Marida's feet became slower, and the link to the slope was being dragged up, turning a straight lane to a 2m tall wall. Banagher shouted: "Jump!" and leaped at the wall that's rising.

Shaking off the gravity that was less than half of usual, both of them jumped with Haro, and their fingertips reached the edge of the wall. Banagher grabbed the rising wall, and the girl did the same too, but her fingers nearly slipped. Banagher grabbed the girl's hand and climbed the wall. They didn't stop rising, but they saw Marida, who couldn't jump in time, slowly becoming smaller.

The builder unit was starting to move. The builder unit that was stuck on the new block of land rose up the monorail by 170m. It moved into the moving circuit before starting to move horizontally. The unit just moved though the builder circuit and retreated back to the airtight wall facing the moon before starting to work from the first construction area.

Banagher checked that the girl and Haro were both fine, and for a short while, didn't have the strength to move a he looked at the landscape that was getting further and further away. Marida continued to remain on the broken slope as she looked over. There was no anger or disappointment in her eyes, just eyes that were as empty as a cave.

Part 9[edit]

All the gates would be closed when they're moving. Thus, nobody could enter the inside of the builder unit. Both of them dragged their tired legs and continued moving up the remaining part of the slope before reaching the top part of the builder unit. Right in front of their eyes was a hilly region that was composed of metal frames that was tilted towards the inside, creating a gradual gradient of materials that extend far beyond. This size wasn't to be described with a number of football fields, but one that could accommodate the entire city.

Banagher spread his limbs out wide on the floor of the passage linking both frames. He felt like he was lying on the clouds, most likely because he felt that gravity was weakened. The girl sat beside him, and both of them spent a little time regaining their breaths. The builder unit was already starting to move, and the breeze that gently blew by felt refreshing on the sweaty body.

“We can ride on this to the airtight wall near the moon. We can get close to the ‘Snail’…the hatch of the space colony builder, but I don’t know whether we can get in.”

Having finally adjusted his breathing, Banagher said this, and the girl merely answered softly, “Is that so…” without even looking back. Her voice sounded drastically different like she couldn’t even keep up with the sudden changes around her, and she had already used up all her strength just looking around.

“My name’s Banagher, Banagher Links. What’s yours?”

Banagher sat up, wanting to catch the girl’s attention. The girl let out an “eh?” and exchanged looks with Banagher, but immediately averted her eyes and said softly, “Erm, I’m called Audrey Burne…”

Audrey. Banagher felt that this was a nice name, but he didn’t have the courage to say it out, and looked away unnaturally. Haro instead came in between them and shouted, “Haro Haro” as it fawned around. The girl’s tense expression became relaxed somewhat as she reached her hands out to grab Haro.

The first time he saw her smile, Banagher had a strange feeling that the artificial sun got brighter, and then told her, “It’s Haro.” But Audrey gave him a puzzled look.

“Don’t you know? This is a souvenir robot made by the ace pilot of the war. It was rather popular when you were young too, right?”

“No idea, I’ve been living in the countryside.”

Which countryside? Banagher looked at her face that was becoming more earnest and wanted to ask more, but Audrey’s smile suddenly vanished as she asked, “Why did you save me?” Having been asked this, Banagher was at a loss of words.

“That’s because…I don’t want people to call me spineless.”

Actually, it’s because I was unhappy that I was threatened by that big sister…he didn’t want to say this, and he felt that it wasn’t just that too. However, Audrey frowned and looked aside. Right now, her confused mental state was full of doubts. Seeing her without any response at all, Banagher said, “That, that’s what you said!”

“Me?”

“Yeah. I was then caught by the police. And I met that scary big sister when I went back to school…”

“Then, you followed Marida and the others?”

Interrupting the misunderstood explanation, Audrey stared at his eyes and said this. Just when Banagher was left speechless by her fast understanding, her clear jade-colored eyes shook, and her expression became gentle after understanding what happened. She suddenly blurted out a ‘sorry’, which stunned Banagher.

“If I told you off for being spineless, I’ll take that back. It seems that I misunderstood you.”

“Misunderstood?”

“Misunderstood you for being a person trapped in your own little world.”

Such unrestrained words caused Banagher to be stunned. He stared at Audrey’s face, who in turn looked like she didn’t say anything wrong, and again felt unhappy for being hit on the sore point before shouting, shrilling, “EVERYONE’S LIKE THAT!”

“Everyone’s been living in such an exaggerated cylinder. Can’t that do?”

“That’s not it. I apologize if my words do sound scathing…because I have never experienced such a life before.”

That somewhat shocked look on her face looked like she had never expected her words to hurt other people, and she looked like a strange creature who lived in a completely different habitat. Banagher asked in disappointment, “Are you some rich princess or something?” Audrey herself smiled as she answered,

“A duckweed floating about. That’s what I was born like.”

Her gaze turned to the builder unit that was moving on the lane beside them and she said in a self-mocking manner. Banagher secretly glanced at her somewhat lonely looking face, and felt that she was someone who he could get along with, and said, “Is that so…then I’m the same too.” Audrey didn’t answer as the artificial sun that seemed to have gone brighter shone on the duo’s head.

The builder would spend about 30 minutes to retreat completely from the builder cable that’s more than 6km long and would dock at the airtight wall facing the moon. During this time, both of them cautiously moved through the wide roof and moved to the other side of the builder unit. It was on both sides of the roof, but the distance was about 1.6km. Once they finished walking, the builder unit had finished moving.

They were only moving about 20km per hour on the builder cable, but the wind that blew by was exceptionally strong too. Banagher let Audrey move in front and carried Haro as he followed from behind silently. This is in case Audrey was about to fall off in the wind, but even in low gravity, her body wasn’t blown away by the wind. The cabled rail didn’t let out any sounds of tremor as only the wind surrounded both of them.

“Who were your pursuers?”

After going through half of the roof, Banagher asked. This was the one question that appeared in his heart amongst the pile of questions.

“My allies. I escaped from them.”

The wind blew Audrey’s brown short hair as she casually said this. Banagher remembered what Micott said and tentatively said, “Are you an activist or something?”

“Activist?”

“Those that oppose the Federation or want the independence of spacenoids or something…”

“…Yeah. That’s sort of correct, but it may be scarier than what you think.”

Looking up at the airtight room that blocked her path, Audrey gave a wry smile. It’s unknown whether that expression was either to mock Banagher’s foolishness or herself. Banagher felt that a war that far exceeded his expectations was about to start and swallowed his saliva. He felt that he could be involved in it and lifted his head, and felt that his sweat and body went cold.

He looked up at the artificial sun that was gradually becoming yellow, and then looked at the watch which showed 2:15pm. He skipped all his lessons, and since it’s vocational classes where everyone’s split up, he couldn’t print notes from Takuya. *What should I do? And I think I have to go to the principal’s office after school*…Most likely, his mind subconsciously forgot about his fear, and right now, he’s thinking about all these things. Banagher looked back and saw a street behind it. That was a familiar street that included Anaheim Electronics Industrial College, and the road just looked like it really faded.

“You said that there won’t be any war, right?”

He turned to look at the girl’s back in front of him and said cautiously. Audrey immediately stopped.

“You said that you have to meet someone to prevent a war from happening. That’s…”

Suddenly, noise and tremors interrupted Banagher’s words. Banagher was shocked and ran beside Audrey before looking in front.

With the builder unit moving back, the colony started to extend. The ‘Wheel’ that covered the outer wall moved, and ‘Industrial 7’ slowly became longer. Inside it, Banagher and Audrey saw the airtight wall facing the moon backing off as the inner wall that’s sliced into a ring

moved.

The cylinder that was 6.4km in diameter rumbled, and the airtight room and the gap between the inner wall of the ring gradually expanded. From between the expanding, through the first construction area that was under way and an area block that was only composed of frames, they could see the insider wall of the ‘Wheel’, and the ‘landscape’ of the colony that wasn’t completed was shown outside. The 6 colony units that were moving back through the cabled rails will enter the gap together to builder the outer wall of the colony, and then continue to move forward. It would continue to build the remaining area blocks in each construction area in order, creating new earth in the colony.

The earth rolled together with the ground, and the builder unit was trapped inside like a hill—this ‘creation of the earth’ seen was already a common sight to Banagher, but the majestic scene of this large movement would make anyone amazed no matter how many times he saw it. Audrey seemed to have the same feeling as she muttered, “Amazing…” she looked completely moved. The glow let out by the jade colored eyes seemed to show an expression a person of her age should have.

“Is this the first time you’re seeing this?”

Audrey nodded as she answered Banagher’s question, but her eyes couldn’t leave the scene in front of her. The clouds that were moving, the airtight wall that was moving further, the base of the artificial sun that got expanded, and the temporary storeroom that was floating beside like a spaceship—

“The world’s gradually becoming bigger…”

Audrey suddenly said that. Her expression and thoughts weren’t like a girl who’s living in a path of Shura far beyond anyone’s imagination. It was a voice filled with similar thoughts and values. The anxiety and terror immediately disappeared as Banagher smiled. He stood beside Audrey, who wasn’t even aware of herself, and looked in front.

Unlike the faded streets behind, the brightness of the world in front of them obviously increased. Breathing the air of the ‘world’ that was just born, Banagher lifted his head and looked at the airtight wall with a metal bowl-shaped depression. At the base of it, the gate leading to the colony builder—the ‘Snail’ was covered in clouds, and they couldn’t see it.

Part 10[edit]

The expansion work on the space colony resonated with a side of the

colony builder. It was 2:30pm, and the <<Wheel>> finished moving. The ‘Magallanica’s retractable deck buzzed silently like how it was supposed to. However, this retractable deck of the <<Magallanica>> could hold a battleship. As according to the nickname <<Snail>>, there’s a snail shell riding on its back. It’s more than 300m in diameter and 1km deep. This place was linked to the airtight wall facing the moon on Industrial 7, and was also the exit where building materials were moved. In that sense, it’s more accurate to describe it as a small scale port.

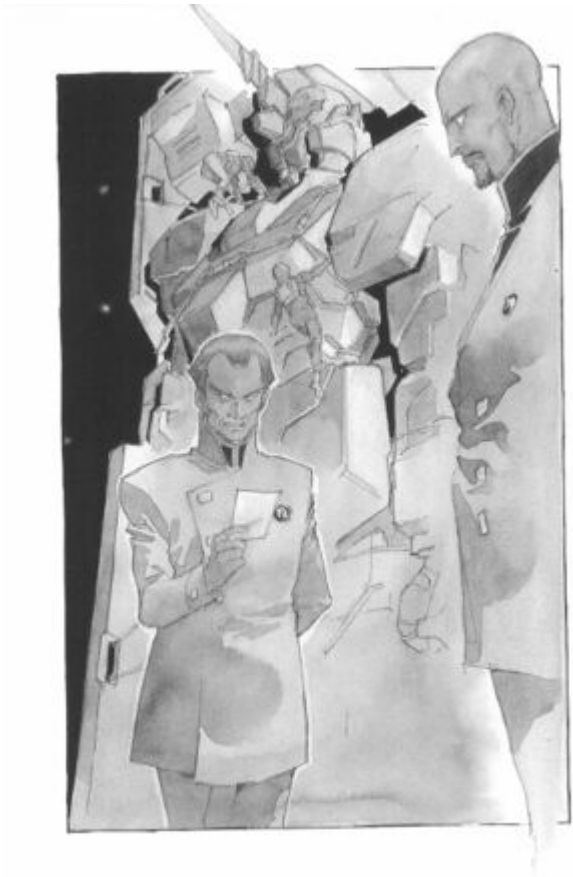
In one of the areas, Cardeas Vist was watching the silent buzzing—the packaging of the RX-0 <<Unicorn>>. The white machine had more than ten personnel preparing it, sealing the hatch or sticking warning labels all over it. That’s a common scene when exchanging goods, but the personnel realized that they weren’t doing an orthodox handing-over and kept silent. They weren’t using a normal mobile suit fixation unit but a special containment that’s highly confined, which is another reason why they were silent. The <<Unicorn>>, which was being packaged inside the box with spare parts and equipment, looked like a toy robot in a model shop. Or rather…a top secret machine in a box.

If there’s a need to mention something different, it’s that the manufacturer wouldn’t accept refunds or repairs, which was why they put in a large number of repair parts and waste materials. The limbs were tied together to prevent the person using it from spoiling it immediately. However, Cardeas himself suspected whether this would be effective or not. If the ‘Unicorn’ were to go full power, such a level of restrain could be destroyed. The unique frame, capabilities and limits of this machine weren't completely grasped yet too…

He thought about all these as he lifted his head to watch the beam rifle being dragged by a mini mobile suit. Gael wordlessly floated over to stand beside him. Seeing Gael move so fluidly under zero gravity and land on both feet, Cardeas wordlessly prompted him to state his intent.

“The second lift camera captured this footage just now.”

Gael handed over some photos of a girl’s face that was entering the cargo lift. Cardeas stared at the face that’s slightly above, and gasped.



“…Why is ‘she’…?”

“Not sure, but she’s coming here. There’s a report that said that there was an intruder that came in through the maintenance path of the artificial sun, but the identity and whereabouts were unknown. Maybe it’s ‘her’.”

She had brown short hair and a taunting expression as it looked like she was deliberately exposing her face and looking up at the camera. If it was a disguise, it would be too brilliantly done. For 10 years, she had never shown a photo of herself. However, 3 years ago, Cardeas saw a photo of hers that the Federation intelligence managed to capture successfully. He could only admit that she was here.

But why was she here? After shuffling through several photos, Cardeas saw the other person who rode the elevator with ‘her’, and couldn’t help but widen his eyes. A shock that was different from seeing ‘her’ face pierced through his heart, and he felt his own hand that’s holding the photo shaking.

“What about this boy?”

“Seemed like her companion. A little too young to be an escort…”

At this moment, Gael stopped, having definitely sensed his shock. Cardeas used his utmost will to control the trembling in his hand and finished looking through the remaining photos.

The dark brown eyes inherited from his mother, and the slightly round face. It couldn’t be a mistake. The ‘tumor’ in his life he kept till now actually appeared at such a moment, and with ‘her’—

“Do we have contact with the ‘Sleeves’?”

Cardeas spent 10 seconds just to let out a voice that didn’t tremble as he asked while ignoring Gael’s concerned look.

“No. But there’s a little commotion in the construction area. There may be a mutiny too.”

“So ‘she’s working on her own too…”

Considering the current situation with the sleeves, this isn’t impossible, but the reason as to why ‘she’ came over wouldn’t be enough to explain why the boy came with ‘her’. His life had no involvement with the ‘Sleeves’ in the first place. What happened? What caused him to come here? Cardeas didn’t want to talk about such ‘private affairs’ to the ‘corporate’ professional Gael as he continued to stare at the people in the photos.

“This may cause an obstruction to the transport of the ‘Box’. Must I send her back?”

Gael said. Cardeas looked at his upright stare, and then lowered his head as he looked back at the photos. At this point, the word dilemma came to his mind.

Part 11[edit]

Once they took the lift down and went through the defenseless gantry gate, they entered the closest elevator. Another 1,500m down to their destination and it was the residential area of the colony builder.

This was the inner area that was on the inside of the 'Snail'. This residential area that had only half the diameter of the space colony had only half the gravity. Banagher and Audrey floated out from the elevator and entered the plains with very little gravity. The outside was a complete green, and there weren't any people around, and neither were there the sounds of vehicle or mini mobile suits moving. The

relaxed voices of the birds was the only thing accompanying the air. This shrill and peaceful silence that would hurt the ears made it feel like a completely different world from the noisy industrial space colony.

Under the flat artificial sun that was illuminating the ceiling, the green pasture looked like it filled the entire inner wall. To the people who would only think that there was only the sight of industrial resource facilities and worker dormitories, this scene would be too unexpected. As the gravity was weaker, the grasses and trees were taller than those in the space colonies, but looked like they were properly trimmed, which made them look odd. This place had tectonic plates that were of an even smaller scale, and if one didn't look around, it would appear to be flat ground. This place also had a luxurious looking villa, and the fountain in the garden was still flowing with water. One would feel that the name 'colony builder' was a lie as what anyone would see was similar to a garden commonly seen in old-century houses of the nobility and the fabled tycoon's private land.

“Just like what Micott said...”

The structure of the Vist Foundation villa itself was moved directly from Earth. Banagher stared at the villa in an engrossed manner that could only be described as 'luxurious'. This should be called a Tudor dynasty mansion, a stone structure that almost couldn't be seen at all in the space colonies. It was 100m wide and the corridor at the front had become all grey because of the erosion. The overwhelming feeling of a fortress would make any viewer feel fear. The wide blue sky and the clouds as a backdrop made it no different from Earth.

What should be an old-styled donut-shaped space colony was shown in the sky. The axis seemed to be like Industrial 7 itself, and the afternoon lighted the mansion tiredly. Banagher hid behind the shrub and looked at the situation at the villa. However, he was stunned by Audrey, who stood up all of a sudden. Even though they were able to walk in unguarded up till now, there wasn't any guarantee that they could pass through safely.

“Are you going?” On hearing these words, Audrey stopped and turned around with a look that seemed to say “What are you doing here?”

“I can go alone. You can head back.”

At this moment, she gave a tone that seemed to emphasize the end of the line. “Bu...” Banagher's voice was filled with doubt, and Audrey turned around.

“They found out that I'm here. They're ready to invite me in.”

“Does the Vist Foundation know you?”

Her eyebrows twitched, showing that she was wavering somewhat “So you really needed to meet someone of the Foundation...” Without waiting for him to finish, Audrey turned around and walked off. Banagher snorted and moved off in larger strides than Audrey.

“Banagher-san...”

“There may be a terrifying big sister out there waiting for me. It's safer for me to go ahead.”

How could he turn around at this now that he came all the way here? “Also, call me Banagher.” After he said that, Banagher carried Haro, who couldn't move really well on the grass, and asked: “Right?” Haro energetically answered back “Haro!” as the voice echoed in his chest.

Banagher took this as a yes and started to walk to the villa. Forget about being served. If we're going to be captured, there's no need to lead us all the way here. He was thinking that since there was no danger, he might as well come to the inside of the 'Snail' since it was a rare chance itself. The colony builder was a mothership that was meant to develop the Jupiter Celestial area. Since he was a technical student who volunteered to go to Jupiter, he was interested in this technology.

In fact, through this viewpoint, moving the green pastures of the Earth to this residential areas was meaningful. To extract the radioactive fuel Helium-3, there was regular transport to Jupiter. However, the total journey of 1.6 billion km would take several years, and it's said that it's not uncommon to see cases where the crew members collapse mentally. Even the Earth would be buried amidst the deep outer space with countless stars in them—maybe it's because the colony builder was supposed to head to a place that's too far for the human soul to work at alone that such a haven was needed. More than half the human population were in space colonies, and became space residents that didn't understand real nature. However, it need not be just a visual thing, as a 'nature' that could be touched, stepped on and sniggered at could save the human soul.

“If we can't leave the ground, what Newtypes can we even talk about...”

She unwittingly muttered that. While Banagher answered back “Eh?”, Audrey gave a vague smile and moved her feet that stopped before. He didn't even know why he felt this way. He didn't have any interest in Zeon Deikun's Newtype theory. Was it because he just heard of the history lesson before?

After a short walk, the grassland that was as high as the knees became a flat green. They were already close enough to see the fine details of the villa. It seemed that there wasn't anyone around, and there wasn't any perimeter wall or gate surrounding the house. Maybe this entire land was private property, and that they entered the garden already.

In that case, they didn't need to think about intruding illegally. Banagher climbed up the stairs leading to the atrium and faced the two large doors. The doors were made of wood, and they were decorated with metal rings and lion heads. Banagher and Audrey nodded at each other and used the metal ring to knock on the door like how it was done in movies. They didn't know whether this could be used as a doorbell, but the sound of the metal knocking was deeper than what they imagined it to be as it seemed to ring through the entire silent area of the residential area. After seeing that the door didn't show any signs of opening, Banagher shrugged his shoulders, and Audrey went forward to grab the door handle. The unlocked door let out a creaking sound as it opened.

The ceiling that was at the second storey had a posh-looking chandelier on it. There was a wide set of stairs linking to the second level, and once they went up, it was a corridor in mid-air that felt like a deck was being repaired. The corridor looked like those in the movies when a posh-looking woman would be dressed up nicely and smiling as she invite them in. there was complete silence inside the dim place, and there wasn't any presence of any butlers coming out to serve them. There wasn't anyone else who questioned the duo who trespassed randomly other than the stares from the paintings on the wall, and the empty domestic presence surrounded Banagher.

It wasn't the emptiness of a house full of charms or the loneliness of an abandoned house. The number of furniture and house decorations made it feel like people once lived in here. However, the cold air didn't have any tinge of warmth—feeling that his body was trembling, Banagher shouted: “Anybody home?” and didn't get any answer. He exchanged glances with Audrey and walked deeper into the first level.

It seemed that there was some regular maintenance as there wasn't any odour in the empty rooms or corridors. The sofas in the living room were covered with dustproof-cloth, and the glass windows with curtains drawn were wiped clean too. Unwilling to open the windows on his own, Banagher looked through the gap that showed a ray light looked around, and walked towards the balcony where he could look down into the atrium. The atrium was a Colosseum that was surrounded on all sides by the building itself, and amidst the different sizes, there

were many sculptures beside the restroom area at the middle.

Each of these were things that Banagher saw in arts textbooks, so these shouldn't be the real thing themselves, but delicately crated duplicates. The sculptures remained inside the empty garden, and there was an empty and chilly sense of presence, making one feel that they may be moving before he was here.

A bird flew by and stopped on the face of a man's status that was deep in thought before flying off again. Banagher looked at the statue and felt that the statue was looking back at him. He swallowed his saliva, took a few steps back from the balcony and recollected his thoughts, saying 'there doesn't seem to be anyone around' and went back to the corridor.

“There should be a command area somewhere. Once there...”

Speaking halfway through, he stopped as Audrey wasn't around. Haro was rolling around on the floor. He looked around and couldn't find anyone. He frantically walked to the neighboring block, and found that there was a door opened downstairs. Banagher hurriedly ran to the exit, saw Audrey standing in the dim room and heaved a sigh of relief.

The side of her face was lit by the light that shone in through the curtains of the windows as she looked up at the wall. Banagher was about to say 'don't scare me like that', but he was stunned when he entered the room.

The ceiling was abnormally high, and on the wall of this room that was the largest he ever saw, there were six really large paintings on it. They were arranged together without leaving any space, and it seemed that the paintings themselves were the wall. No, those were paintings. They look like they were woven onto a piece of cloth. A large embroidery...it's called a tapestry, correct?

The six tapestries were all of different sizes, but the smallest one was 3m wide, and the height was about 5m. They should be related works as the base colors and structures of all these works were the same. They had a woman standing at the middle of a garden with flowers and animals woven in them. The imaginary world the woman was in would remind one of a small outer space. There were two beasts on both sides, and the completely different parties created 6 scenes. Amongst the two beasts, one of them was a lion, and the other one was one with the body of a horse and a long thin horn on its head—

“Unicorn...”

Audrey muttered to herself. Banagher heard his heart pulsate for a

moment.

The memory of the white mobile suit he saw this morning in the subway train awoke in him, and the blood that moved inside his body started to rumble. He didn't know the reason, and he didn't have the strength to even think about it. The woman who was taking fruits from the tray the maidservant was holding; the woman playing the harp at the table; the woman making a crown of flowers...Banagher felt that something inside his mind was rumbling and about to break out from his skull as his eyes were enchanted by the tapestry.

The woman who let the unicorn rest on her knees and looked at the mirror; the woman holding a flag with a moon on it; and last of all, a woman standing in front of a small tent, putting her jewellery into a box a maidservant's holding. The unicorn and the lion were on both sides of the tent, and the woman who looked like she was putting her jewelery away was entering a tent. The tent had the words 'A Mon de Désir' written on it, and this was an ancient language that would only be understood by only a few researchers. The meaning was...

“...My only wish.”

He subconsciously said it out, and immediately felt a chill. I couldn't possibly read it. I couldn't possibly understand it. Banagher shook off Audrey's anxious expression and asked, “Is this a famous painting?”

“I don't know...but since it was Vist Foundation who shifted this piece of art over to outer space, I think it's something valuable.”

Audrey frowned in surprise as she noted. I know, Banagher told himself this in his mind. It doesn't matter whether it was famous or not. I know this piece of art, and it's not that I saw this before on TV or textbooks. No, I never even touched it before. A long time ago, I couldn't even get to the bottom of this tapestry. Someone carried me up and told me the meaning. At that time, that room also had the sound of a piano playing—

He slowly turned around. The piano that was beside the window as basked under the sunlight that came in. Banagher walked over to it and touched the piano that was covered in cloth.

“Seems like nobody's staying here. I'll go find the control room. You...”

“I remember.”

Muttering unknowingly, Banagher turned to look at Audrey: “I remember. I saw these before.”

“These tapestries?”

Looking at the tapestries that were hung on the wall, Audrey gave a look of disbelief back at him. Banagher was forced to move by this irritation he couldn't explain and said: “No, it's not like this...” At this moment, a third person's voice could be heard: “Do you like it?” causing him to gasp.

He looked around. A man was standing at the door. He looked at Audrey, who was frozen, and again looked back at Banagher. The man slowly entered the oroom. The somewhat dim light lit his silver hair and sharp eyes, and Banagher felt that the pressure in this room got even more intense. He subconsciously took two steps back, knocked into the piano, and the photo frame on the piano dropped down.

He instinctively turned back to look, and saw the face of a ten-year-old, slightly plump and giving a poker face. The boy seemed to have a man and a woman on both sides, most probably his parents. The woman, who seemed to be the mother, had her hand on the boy's shoulders as she smiled. The energetic man standing on the other side was also like the boy, showing a poker face. Looking at the man's face as he had that Chinese-styled collared shirt on, Banagher again turned around to stare at those sharp eyes in the dim place.

His cheeks were slightly skinner, and his hair had faded in color, but the man in front of him was completely identical to the man in the photo. Most likely, he's the owner of this villa. The stakeholder of Anaheim Electronics, and the one rumored to be the actual owner of the 'Snail', the leader of Vist Foundation—

““The Lady and the Unicorn”, author unknown. Most people thought that it was a tapestry made during the Middle Ages in France. This wasn't a copy. It's said that the ex-leader spent a lot of effort trying to get it during the One Year War.”

As he casually looked at the two intruders, the man—Cardeas Vist continued to talk. “The New Moon's Flag this woman's holding was the crest of someone who represented an advisor to the French King in the past, Vist Foundation, my family. Most likely, an ancestor requested someone to make it, and it ended up in his hands.”

The voice sounded steady, but had impeccable strength in it. Banagher put the photo frame that fell down back to its position and looked at the faces of the people in the family.

There was Cardeas, who was about 20 years younger than before, a woman who seemed to be his wife, and the boy. These were all faces he could not recognize, faces of strangers. After seeing that, the sense

of 'recognition' became ambiguous, and the tapestry and the piano suddenly became unknown foreign things.

“Right now, the common idea was that this series of tapestries represented the 5 senses of humanity. The woman holding the fruit represented taste; the woman holding the harp represented hearing; the woman creating the crown of flowers represented smell; the woman holding the mirror represented sight; and the woman touching the horn of the unicorn represented touch...” Explaining in order, Cardeas looked at the last picture, and his eyes narrowed. “And the last one was called the 'tent'. As for what this meant, there wasn't any decisive conclusion to this. The woman takes off the bracelet she was wearing and puts it into the box in the maidservant's hands. There was a tent behind it with the words 'My one desire' on it. The unicorn and the lion are leading her in. What does that tent mean? What does the 'box' represent?”

Audrey's eyes widened, and Banagher could feel her tension. Cardeas turned to look at her.

“Some said that the tent had her husband in it, and some said that the tent led to a mental world where one gives up everything. Right now, the commonly accepted explanation would be the latter. While giving up the bracelet, the lady wanted to give up the delight her five senses brought, and the desire that they bring before releasing herself to a zone only the sixth sense could feel...the free will ancient scholars talked about was 'release'. In other words, the 'my own desire' was a realm of realization, and the tent was a symbolization of it. The bracelet represented personal desire, and the 'box' was a symbol of an earthly seal. Of it could also be interpreted that as the 'box' was opened, the lady was able to give up on her personal desire and face the next world.”

“This unicorn's existence is also symbolic. This is a legendary beast that had many meanings to it, but our family interprets it as the beast of possibilities. It was a beast that was born out of everyone's belief and love. Humans use this possibility of existence to raise this beast, causing a situation where it didn't matter whether it existed or not...like what Riike's poem said. On one hand, it could be interpreted as the sign of the Virgin, but we shall use it as a more ordinary term. We symbolize it as the power of belief...the symbol of hope.”

Once Cardeas finished, Banagher saw that there was a crest sewn on his chest pocket, one that looked like a unicorn. Just when he was about to ask whether it was the crest of the Vist Foundation or something, Cardeas looked at Audrey and said: “Pardon me for my late introductions.”

“I'm the owner of this house. My name is Cardeas Vist.”

Though Audrey looked rather mild at the moment, her expression wasn't showing any smile at all. She inadvertently looked away and started to stammer. “I...” But she clenched her fists tight and again faced Cardeas' tall body.

“Sorry to intrude on you. I'm...”

Cardeas raised his hand gently to prevent her from continuing. “I know you. Please don't declare your name first.”

“But...”

“You don't want to get this boy involved, right?”

Saying this, Cardeas looked over at Banagher, but as their eyes met, his eyes looked back at Audrey.

“If there's anything important, please hold on for a while. However, if

you're the sort of person I think you are, I hope that you understand that we're meeting under dangerous circumstances. Your presence here would make your comrades feel betrayed."

"Zinnerman's a cautious man, so he won't create any unnecessary trouble..."

"Unnecessary? Is the need to ensure your safety unnecessary?"

The fists that were tightly clenched trembled slightly as Audrey went silent. Unable to understand what they were saying, Banagher could only stare at them in a flabbergasted manner, and his eyes met Cardeas, who suddenly looked over at him.

"You risked yourself too much. She'll be under our protection. Head back now."

No matter whether it was some bigshot in the monetary world or not, one shouldn't be giving such a condescending look at someone they just met for the first time. Banager stepped forward, but got taken aback by Cardeas' sharp expression as he continued to remain there. Cardeas' entire body gave a heavy presence as he closed the distance between himself and Banagher.

Cardeas' eyes scanned Banagher from head to toe and stopped at the Haro at his feet. "Such an old toy." There was a mysterious mocking-like tone in the voice. On hearing these unexpected words, Banagher looked straight at Cardeas' cold expression.

"Do you know why she's being pursued, and what kind of people were pursuing her?"

"Well...I don't know, but they're really scary people."

"Scary?"

"I just had this feeling."

Gripping his trembling fingers hard, Banagher answered without wavering, and Cardeas' eyes suddenly became kiner: "Saying such things that a Newtype would say..." The somewhat wry voice entered Banagher's ears. Of course, one didn't need to look at the expression to see that he was laughing at Banagher for arrogantly saying that in a childish manner.

"I was born in a place where such people kept going in and out, so I could tell."

That was the last straw. Banagher was already expecting to be

laughed at, but the wryness in Cardeas' eyes vanished. “...I see. So you say that you can recognize people?” Banagher could tell that this voice again sounded like laughing.

“Then, let's not waste what you know. Head back. If you continue to stay here, your future will be wrecked. This is not what the person who sent you to Anaheim Electronics wanted.”

The unexpected words caused him to be shocked. Was his cover blown? No, Banagher suddenly thought. This Cardeas may be a friend of his father who he never met and requested him to transfer into the College.

From the few words his mother spoke and the history up till now, he knew that his father should be someone of status. Though it was a vague memory, the feel of the room and the tapestries didn't seem to be just a false impression...so strong that if he never saw the family photo, he would have thought that this was his family.

“You...knew?”

Immediately afterwards, Banagher forgot about all of these and started asking. Cardeas moved his eyes away slightly.

“I'm the chairman after all, and I can check any student's particulars and expel them accordingly.”

The last words went through Banagher with a straight gaze. Since he was being watched the moment he and Audrey, who was being 'hosted', entered the 'Snail', it's easy to investigate their history. The cold reality of understanding this caused Banagher to lower his head dejectedly. The passion shown just now cooled off as he felt his knees lose strength.

“I'll give recognition to a young man's impulse. It's alright to believe in instincts. However, if your knowledge and ability isn't enough, your response will be the wrong one. Go back. Don't get involved in this.”

After this one-sided aggression, Cardeas left Banagher. Banagher couldn't say anything, didn't even have the strength to stare at his back, and lowered his head. He succumbed again. This time, he succumbed under the violence called authority, and was about to collapse again. But even though he had this feeling, his wilted nerves didn't feel like getting back up in a motivated manner. Banagher turned to look at Audrey.

Audrey looked back at him too. After their eyes met, she immediately looked away, which made Banagher feel despair as he already knew

what Audrey was about to say next.

“That's enough, Banagher. Go back.”

Her eyes were looking at him again, and the words were what he imagined it to be as they pierced through his heart. “But...!” Banagher's tone was full of panic.

“It's enough that you brought me here. I'll handle the rest.”

After giving a stiff smile, Audrey looked over at Cardeas. On seeing those eyes that were filled with intense will, Cardeas wordlessly walked away. Banagher felt that Audrey was about to follow Cardeas, and before he could think, his feet stepped on the floor first.

Though his posture was tilting somewhat because of the lower gravity, Banagher blocked Audrey as she was about to walk to the door. “Audrey.” Banagher called her name, and her jade-green eyes were looking back at him.

“Before I met you this morning, I saw a white mobile suit in the subway train.”

After blinking a bit, Audrey lifted her head slightly. Banagher ignored Cardeas, who was eavesdropping on them, and continued to look at her face.

“After that, I wanted to go to work, but there was no work for the day. I went to the cafeteria with Takuya, and saw you floating near the sun. I don't know much after that, but I was really excited. It's like another world appeared right in front of me, or that something I couldn't see in the past appeared right in front of me...this was the first time I felt that. It's like I felt my comfort zone for the first time.”

Banagher himself knew how foolish these words were, but his mouth just couldn't stop. On hearing that Audrey was looking a little moody and becoming more so, Baangher himself continued.

“I don't care who you are. Just say that you need me, say that it's better for me to be here. Then I...”

“No.”

Audrey answered before he could finish. Shocked by the stiff expression and the impact of the voice, Banagher felt his body waver.

“The world you saw today was nothing. It's just a dark and cold world. You shouldn't be here.”

“Audrey...”

“Forget about it. Don't get involved with me. It's better for you.”

This time, it was really a tone to clear the divide. Audrey turned around, and Banagher was rooted there. All around the delicate yet obstinate profile, the dark red base of the tapestries appeared in the dim place.

Perhaps seeing that the little drama between both of them was over, Cardeas nodded his head slightly, and men in suits appeared at the door of the room, ushering Audrey in with a courteous demeanor. Audrey lifted her head and followed them out. Banagher instinctively tried to catch up, but he was stopped by the presence that suddenly appeared behind him. Unknowingly, two men appeared from a room and were standing behind Banagher.

“We'll send you back to your hostel.”

One of the men. The man who would remind one of the ferocity and viciousness of a hunter had the crest of a unicorn on the chest. Knowing that he would be suppressed if he tried to resist, Banagher looked at Cardeas, who turned around and said just when he was about to lead Audrey out of the room: “This would be better.”

“The people chasing her may view you as a target.”

It was logical. Though Banagher himself felt that this was just an excuse, he couldn't say anything. Banagher clenched his fists and lowered his head. The embarrassment and regret left a stinging feeling in his nose, and the unicorn on the tapestries became blurred.

Audrey went through the door of the room without turning back, and Cardeas followed her from behind. As he left, he looked back, and seemed to stop for a moment as he probably looked at Banagher. However, once Banagher lifted his head, the profile vanished, and the light that came in through the door remained in the room, causing Banagher to see remains of the world he lost.

Volume 2 – Day of the Unicorn pt.2

Chapter 2 (continued)[edit]

Part 1[edit]

“Return back to the ship?”

It's 4:02pm. As the light of the artificial sun started to weaken, Marida was talking into the receiver on the public phone. (That's right). Zinnerman answered.

(End the search for the time being and come back before the deal begins. Same goes for Alec and Besson.)

It's been more than 2 hours since they lost her. They didn't have a way to break through the large construction area, and it's true that they were just wasting time. However, they ended their search too quickly. Marida looked at the electric car that was parked beside the public phone on the road. Alec, who was in the driver's seat, was staring at the neighboring building—the school compound of Anaheim Electronics. It's impossible to see from here, but Besson should be behind the school watching through the same method.

Of course, nobody could guarantee that the student will come back. But after the huge commotion in the construction area, it's impossible for him to stay there, and there're no other leads. Marida looked at the watch to see that there's still some time before the transaction's done, and said with a somewhat anxious voice, <'the girl' must have entered the space colony builder>.

"We know the identity of the student who helped her 'escape'. Most likely, it may be something related to the Foundation. Once we wait for him to come back…"

"That Foundation contacted us already. The location of the transaction is changed to the space colony builder."

The fingers holding onto the phone trembled. The Vist Foundation that made contact with 'her' is now requesting a change in location for the deal—and in their territory too. Feeling the irritation of having the initiative snatched from them, Marida asked: <what about the 'girl'?> (Play dumb) Zinnerman said.

(We have no idea of what their intentions are, but we can only pretend that we know anything. Go get ready just in case something happens.)

Then, shouldn't we be going to the colony builder together instead of going back to the 'Garencieres'? Marida wanted to say instinctively, but swallowed her words. The assumption here Zinnerman's thinking of isn't something that can be handled with just one or two people being on guard, but mobile suits that have to be on standby.

It'll be great if Vist Foundation, who deliberately opened their stronghold, hand her over. If not, at that time—Marida answered 'understood' as she watched the school gate of Anaheim Electronics. It

seemed that it's after school, and the students that were in plainclothes were laughing and walking out from the gate to the electric car carpark.

What causes them to laugh like this? Marida saw a young woman pushing a baby cart along, walking beside them, and felt really happy. It's not because that she imagined these pedestrians getting involved in the 'assumed situation'. Once they're involved, it's easy for their lives to vanquish easily. However, they will never dream of such a thing. They never actually thought about their deaths actively or subconsciously, and think that today's just like yesterday. Marida was really unhappy as she understood that peace was just a mistake made by this group mentality, and that it was extremely fragile.

I took in too much air outside, she thought. Even though she wanted to capture that student called Banagher and interrogate him about 'her' whereabouts, she herself isn't suited to do this kind of work. She wanted to get rid of this tight-fitting clothing and return to the ship…

(It's finally time. Let's go check out what's in that treasure box.)

Zinnerman said through the phone, perhaps reading through her thoughts. Marida wasn't looking at the strangers, but looked up at the sky of the warm space colony that made her uncomfortable.

Part 2[edit]

Below Marida's feet, about 50m away from the inner walls, at the outer walls of Industrial 7 that's in direct contact with vacuum, two objects were closing in.

The larger one was more than 15m in diameter, and the two objects that were of irregular shapes look like normal pieces of rock in the shoal space region. The pilot of the <<Geara Zulu>> that was hidden on the back of the solar panel, Savoir, saw it. It's unknown whether it was a block of dirt from the destroyed portion of the space colony, or whether they're debris from some mineral refining satellite. Either way, it's moving at the same speed as Industrial 7, and even if it touches the space colony, it will only graze the outer wall. The port management's radar should have detected it. If they decide that there's danger, they can set up countermeasures like using the colony-defense missiles to change the trajectories and so on. Savoir made this conclusion, and didn't pay attention to the enlarged visual of the CG.

If he focused attention on a certain point, the overall surveillance will be eased. He has been watching outside alone for more than 12 hours, and he had already listened to the music he took out to listen to pass the time once. He felt that his concentration was weakening. He

opened the visor of the helmet and used a tissue paper to wipe away the sweat. Savoir looked at the numerous windows on the all-view monitor. The 4 miniature camera devices that were set around the machine showed their visuals over to the cockpit of the Geara Zulu. There were the lights of a civilian ship that came into the dock, the subway lights that's running on the outer wall of the space colony, and the two blocks of rock that were closing in. Savoir checked that everything was normal, and thought that it will be over in another 3, 4 hours. Once the deal's done, he can return to the <<Garencieres>> and stretch his limbs nicely. He, who hasn't had more than a thousand hours of flying, was treated as a rookie by the crew of the <<Garencieres>>, and is finishing a day's worth of recon without handing over his duties…

Suddenly, the surveillance camera showed a signal, and the broadcast channel music that was playing inside the cockpit became static. Savoir hurriedly put his hand on the arm-raker, amplified the volume of the high frequency wireless radio and concentrates his consciousness on the countless conversations through the statics. The signal vanished after about 10 seconds, and Savoir heaved a sigh of relief.

That's probably interference from the Minovsky Particles! Someone must have scattered the particles around this region to jam the electric waves as it expand, but the interference this time is really big. For precaution's sake, Savoir did all sorts of mechanical tests, and checked the visuals of the surveillance cameras. There was nothing different from before other than the two blocks of rock moving behind the space colony and entering the blind spot of the camera.

However, Savoir didn't know that the Minovsky Particles interference for that moment was so strong that even the port radar that had shielding parts was covered. The two pieces of rock then used this moment to change directions, not being what Savoir expected.

The uneven rocky surfaces let out glows from the control boosters, and the two stone blocks were slowly approaching <<Industrial 7>>. During the short amount of time while the boosters let out thrust, the stone blocks attained relative velocity to the rotational speed of the space colony, and they were stuck on a part of the outer wall that had the 'Wheels' on it. Then, the thing that looked like a stone block from the outside seemed to explode like a balloon; and what appeared inside was obviously an artificial object.

The tea-brown body that was inorganic like rock had limbs that didn't seem to have anything to do with a solid object. Also, the eye-like visor that had the function of covering the sensor on the head made it seem

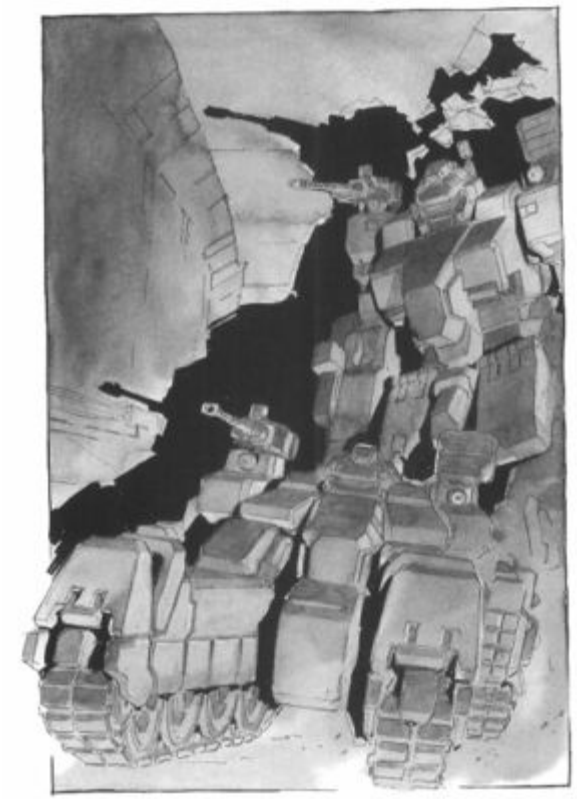
like it's a mobile suit humanoid weapon, but there's a lot of characteristics that didn't fit it. It copied the traditional look of the Federation Army made mobile suits, but its head is so flat that it feels like it was hit, and it is only 12m tall, 2 sizes smaller than a standard mobile suit. The mechanical shoulders do not have any hands at the wrists, only wrists that were designed uniquely for this squarish unit. The advantage of this mobile suit is that it's very versatile in terms of use, as its arms can be used to holster weapons. Based on this, the state right now doesn't look very efficient.

However, this is only one form of the D-50C <<Loto>> machines. The two <<Lotos>> removed their stone exterior—dummy balloons used for disguise, and got close to the space colony while being hidden in Minovsky's Particles, and the machines that were obviously much smaller than mobile suits were facing the outer walls of the 'Wheels'.

The stars in the background were moving relatively to the rotational speed of the colony, and the machines draw out the mechanical arms from under the wrists. The tip of the beam burners melt the outer wall of the 'Wheels'. Unlike a beam saber that's a concentrated form of beam, the beam burner shoots out hi-energy mega-particles directly, causing the outer wall of the 'Wheels' to melt like butter. Less than several seconds later, more than 10m square of the outer wall is sliced off, and both <<Lotos>> manage to successfully enter the place. One machine enters, and the second machine goes in to weld the outer wall from the inside. This is to simply weld the important parts and not spend too much time when escaping.

There's no air filled in this outermost area of the 'Wheels' as the metallic frames were still being built. The ceiling is less than 10m tall, and the materials that were left aside were left behind the pillar, creating a view similar to the bottom of a ship or below a jumping board. As the <<Loto>> at the back is welding, the machine at the front sneaks into the narrow space, and ducks down as its feet touches the ground. It looks like it fell as it touched the ground because of gravity, but this is the correct operating process of this machine.

Just as its feet are about to touch the ground, the caterpillar units that are installed at the back are deployed; and the 2 set of crawlers that bore 4 wheels each bore the weight of the <<Loto>> unit as it land. Both legs then reached forward, and the thigh-equivalent parts were extended forward. The upper arms slide back, and the two wrist are attached to the left and right side of the machine, forming a machine with limbs all over the place.



The flattened head is half-entrenched back inside the body, and the six-wheeled crawlers that are equipped behind the thighs of the <<Loto>> land on the ground. The <<Loto>> that's not a humanoid shape but a tank now moves its four crawlers and went forward as a tank. The <<Loto>> behind it transforms into a tank too without waiting for its ally to move far, and men in normal suits came out from the troop transport room behind it. They then leave the machine under zero gravity and use the boosters to go all over the place before quickly starting on their designated missions.

The smart normal suits that look like they're for pilots to use have bulletproof vests with magazine pouches worn on the outside, and the holsters of the M-92F automatic pistol are attached onto their right legs. The arms and knees have hardened plastic guards, and there are recoilless rifles slung behind the shoulders. The men are all wearing this equipment, and didn't do any unnecessary movements. The boosters that have jet fire caps to reduce the lights are moving, and the profiles of the people wearing helmets can be seen landing on the ground, not minding the gravity on their bodies as they begin to deal

with the access hatches on the wall and the ground. They have to restore the alarm mechanism as the outer wall was melted, set up a mechanism for them to maintain contact with each other even with the effects of Minovsky Particles, and establish connections to control systems that manages lifelines and safety system. The assignment is completed in less than one minute, and during this time, the <<Loto>> that's moving in front went down the split path and disappeared. In this faint passage with neither air nor sight of crowds, the rumbling of the caterpillars is slowly echoing as it moves further and further away.

The slight tremble echoed through the ground, causing the machine to jerk, and reach Commander Daguza Mackle in the control room. 45 seconds after the operation began, Daguza said 'we're through', and a short (Go) went through the wireless communication, letting Daguza know that the relay device is set up.

"Safety system."

(Go)

"Governor."

(Go)

After a hushed exchange, the fully-armored men end their work and return to the <<Loto>>. The last one moves through the back of the vehicle, and Daguza indicate the pilot sitting at the front to start moving. The Strategic Naval Research Institute—SNRI developed mini core reactor gives off power that won't lose to an ordinary reactor as it moves the 4 crawlers. Daguza's <<Loto>> jerked as it does not move down the path the front unit went through, but through the narrow hatch.

The small size of the reactor allows the machine to be smaller, but the <<Loto>> can carry quite a few people. As a transforming mobile suit, it also has to fulfill the specs of a transport carrier during special missions, so, needless to say, it holds a transport room that can hold 8 troops inside. The control room can also contain 3 people, the captain, the driver and the communication personnel, and has the function of a command vehicle once it reaches a combat zone. On the screen at the captain's seat, Daguza summoned out the map of <<Industrial 7>>. The flatscreen image of the space colony has the link between the space colony and the 'Wheels' as the center, and through the light spots, they're able to tell where Team Alpha and Team Beta are at; allowing Daguza to realize how accurate the Inertia Navigation System (INS)—used to grasp locations through accelerations operation and time—is.

The operation has lasted for 1 hour and 40 minutes ever since they launched from the mothership <<Nahel Argama>>. There's no delay in their journey, but Daguza isn't taking any risks here. Earth, colonies, asteroids—to the members of ECOAS, special forces of the Earth Federation who believe in 'fighting no matter where the location is', invading colonies is just something normal for that. The problem is how to finish the mission without being seen. Daguza let the screen roll and focus on the stage of this battle. Down the inner wall of the 'Wheels', they will reach what's basically equivalent to a dock of Industrial 7, the colony builder <<Magallanica>> that has a unique shape.

It's a large facility governed as a public colony, but in fact, it's the base of the Vist Foundation. That place has the target item, the <<Laplace Box>>. ECOAS' mission is to confirm its existence, prevent them from handing it over to the third party, and if possible, reclaim it. It's not stated, but Daguza knows that attached to the 'stop' word are the words 'at any costs', and 'reclaim' has the word 'secretly' attached to it. He knows this is a mission that the standard army can't do and a mission that ordinary people can't see, and that's why the ECOAS are recruited. However, how much do their comrades on the command side know? They investigated through the insides of the <<Magallanica>> and the security system, but they have no idea of what the most important 'box' contains. Even if they find it out, he doesn't know how to move it.

Thus, they have to confirm its existence. But with the involvement of the third party, the 'Sleeves', it can be said to be impossible for them to find this unidentified object. The success of this mission and the safety of the forces will all be in jeopardy unless they act 'at all costs'. Daguza realize that they're fighting with the savage title of manhunters, opened the visor of his helmet, pull the mask that was at his chin up to his nose before closing the visor.

Through the visor of the normal suit, what can be seen was only a cold expression. That nature of eliminating one's own identity is ECOAS' overall nature. In this get up, all members give up on their identities and become machines that will do their missions effectively, closing in on their targets silently and finishing the mission. They'll disguise the results as an accident. Every person exists, and yet doesn't, and are just a unit that forms ECOAS.

They will eliminate the waste that's released from this huge organization called the Earth Federation without anyone knowing, clearing them without mercy. The way some forms of media portray them were right, but parts have no wishes, and won't have any expectations. As long as they're individuals or organizations, there'll be

wastage when people live. This is something someone has to do—Daguza use this philosophy he adheres to in order to shake away the doubt in his mind and turned his sights back to the screen in front of him.

The two <<Lotos>> use the short layer under the ground of the colony to quickly move through at top speed and gradually close in at the entry point of the space builder. The time now is 5:06pm, and the <<Nahel Argama>> is about to take action. Daguza exhales as he watches the time tick by. The breath that's under the incombustible fabric mask brings about a presence of actual combat into the nose.

Part 3[edit]

(All personnel, get to type-2 alert. Mobile Suits are to get ready for launch. Release the airlocks. Pilots, back down.)

The audio broadcast rang through the fleet, and the mobile suit starboard 'AIR' red warning light was flashing. Riddhe Marcenas was checking that the two layers of his helmet were attached as he jumped into the cockpit of the 8th unit of the <<ReZEL>> .

The core reactor was starting to run. Once he turned on the full-screen mode, the screens on the inner wall of the ball-shaped cockpit were being activated one by one, showing all the 20m tall <<ReZELs>> that were around him. On this wide mobile suit deck, the <<Jesta>> painted with the serial number NA-J005 left the fixate and was moving towards the lift leading to the catapult. The mechanic holding the baton was floating in the air. The next machine that left the fixator was the 4th <<ReZEL>> unit . The warning light <<AIR>> was lighting, indicating that the catapult launch deck and the mobile suit deck's airlocks were opened, and air was drawn out. The sound of the mobile suit activation mechanism and the sounds of the alarm quickly vanished, leaving only countless wireless sounds ringing in Riddhe's ears. The sortie team's preliminary checks, the signals on the bridge, the squad leader's instructions; he has to hear the necessary information from amidst the large amount of sounds and answer them all, and that's the job of a pilot.

(Romeo 001 notifying all units. Ian's squadron will launch after Norm's squadron. Once Norm's squadron enters the battle zone, we'll begin surveillance on Industrial 7. Norm's squadron will enter the standby area and provide cover for the assault squad and the fleet. The 'Sleeves' may have entered Industrial 7, so don't let your guard down thinking that we just need to protect ECOAS.)

As he carries out the checks as according to the textbook, the mobile

suit squad leader, Lieutanant Commander Norm Basilicock was talking to everyone. Norm was the one in charge of leading all the mobile suits on the <<Nahel Argama>>, but for this launch, he's leading a squadron, and the remaining forces are left for Commander Ian to command. Riddhe belongs to Ian's squad, and amongst them, there are 4 <<ReZEL> codenamed Romeo and two <<Jegans>> codenamed Juliet. The Norm's squad is positioned far away from the <<Nahel Argama>> to prevent any accidents.

Prevent accidents—contact with the 'Sleeves'. Riddhe thought for a moment and was about to stop his hand when the mechanical officer Jona Gibney suddenly barged into the cockpit cabin. Gibney ignored Riddhe, who's spaced out, leaned his body over, and asked, (Did you hear that?)

(It's the 2nd fleet's <<Clop>> that fought against the Sleeves. I heard 3 units were taken down.)

Both of them had their helmets sticking together to pass their words through vibrations. This 'intimate conversation' is very useful for those who don't want their conversations to be overheard through the wireless network. Riddhe forgets about the misfortune of seeing Gibney's bearded face up close and says in surprise, "Three?" He did hear of a battle happening near the shoal space region during the explanation just now, but he didn't hear the details. It's really a shocking thing to hear that three mobile suits were taken down.

(Really, what in the world are they doing in such a colony? Don't damage the machine.)

Perhaps Gibney was able to see Riddhe's pale face through the visor as he deliberately uses a casual tone to say that, slaps Riddhe on the helmet, and leaves the cockpit. Riddhe instinctively closes the hatch, checking whether there's any problems with the air flow from the pump, and remembers his peer pilots that were also assigned to the <<Clop>>>.

He remembers that the <<Clop>> that's assigned to the second fleet of Londo Bell has 6 units. They might not be all taken down at the same time, but for 3 units to be taken down; *is it a large number of forces fighting, or did the 'Sleeves' have some ace pilot?* No matter what it is, it means that the enemy with such firepower may be hiding at Industrial 7, and the hunters are going to start something over there—

(Ensign Riddhe, do you copy me?)

This time, squad leader Norm's face appeared on the window. Riddhe

hurriedly answered “Yes!”

(Never ever mention what you just heard. Forget about it.)

It’s not a communication throughout the entire fleet, but a one-on-one conversation. This is forbidden in battle, but to the members of the <<Nahel Argama>>, Norm’s words carry more weight than a textbook. Riddhe remembers the heavy atmosphere in the captain’s room and the term ‘Laplace’s Box’ that’s full of mystery, before answering, “Yes, I understand.”

(There’re some things that are better for you not to know of. In your position, even if you don’t want to hear it, you will one day hear the truth.)

“I don’t want to walk down the path of politics…”

(I know, but it’s the same no matter what you think.) Norm grimaces as he interrupts the sullen looking Riddhe, (Anyway, don’t get hurt in this stupid battle. I don’t want to be watched by Senator Marcenas.)

Norm uses a normal captain’s snark to end this and closes the communication screen. He probably doesn’t want his subordinates to feel goosebumps in their hearts. Riddhe feels that on one hand, this man isn’t to be underestimated, but on the other hand, he experiences the trustworthiness of this captain, and feels much more relaxed. But at the same time, he feels a strong sense of tension after thinking that anyone with such a mindset can die in a real battle, and his butt crack starts to tighten up.

After the preliminary order, it’s finally Riddhe’s turn, and he lets the <<ReZEL>> no. 8 come out from its fixtate. He follows the instructions of the mechanic waving the baton and takes the beam rifle from the armaments rack. This kind of basic action is already part of the computer process, so there’s no need to operate it manually. The <<ReZEL>> grabs the beam rifle in a fluid motion that’s like a human and heads to the lift. For every step it takes, the hooks at its feet will latch onto the barbs on the deck, and the tremors and sound of metal colliding with each other reaches the cockpit.

While moving up the lift, Riddhe starts to think of the ‘home’ that he left for a long time. *Does dad know about the <<Laplace Box>> that will end the Federation government when it’s open?* He randomly thought, but feels that this is stupid and tries to get rid of the notion. At this point, the lift reached its destination, and Riddhe’s ears hears the tense voice of a female (Romeo 008, please head to the 3rd catapult and launch after Juliet 4.) At a corner of the all-view monitor, in the

communications screen that's 10cm wide, Mihiro Oiwakken's tense face was shown there.

It seems that it's not just the pilot who was feeling fear and thrill from being involved for the first time and facing a real battle, as even the operator is showing the same thing. *So the 'Mini-tank' can feel scared too,* Riddhe thought for a moment, and an unknown impulse appeared in his mind. Riddhe doesn't think too much into this as he says,

"Understood…Ensign Mihiro. Do you want to go catch a movie with me once we disembark?"

(Juliet 4, path's clear. Please launch.) Following Mihiro's uninterruptable voice, the <<Jegan>> that's codenamed Juliet 4 launches, and the light green humanoid-shaped machine sides down the catapult. *Did she not hear it, or did she ignore it?* Feeling awkward, Riddhe lets the feet of the <<ReZEL>> latch onto the catapult that's bounced back. He watches the mechanic wave the baton beside his feet, and the sight of outer space on the other side of the catapult enters his eyes. Mihiro suddenly brings her face closer to the communications window and whispers (You're the third person to invite me out.) "Is that so?" Riddhe asks as he checks whether the lights on his individual circuit is on.

(This is the first time I'm being so popular. Do guys like to invite people out in such crazy moments?)

"Ahh…maybe. Just want to have something on my mind."

Riddhe realizes that he was being too honest once he saw Mihiro cringe her chin back angrily, but it was too late. The lights on the individual circuit vanishes, and Mihiro reverts back to being an emotionless operator as it seems impossible to ask her out. *Doesn't actually matter;* Riddhe feels really sorry as he says it to himself in his heart. She's not used to this kind of thing, and if she can just easily say 'okay', guys will definitely fly out happily.

(Romeo 008, equipping catapult. Launch preparation complete.)

Mihiro says with a completely unrestrained voice. Riddhe half-reluctantly grabs onto the control stick, and then hears a whisper (I don't like horror movies.) Unable to realize in time that she may have said this to everyone, Riddhe shouted in his heart 'got it', and his voice is so energetic that it's really awkward,

"RIDDHE MARCENAS, ROMEO 008, LAUNCHING!"

The countdown beside the catapult shows 0 and the operator lets out

the launch signal. The cable-powered catapult is shot out, and immediately, 5G's worth of gravity is pressing down on Riddhe.

The <<Nahel Argama>>, which looks like a large wooden horse, has an opened-air deck on the right foreleg—and both top and bottom sides can be used as runways in zero gravity. The <<ReZEL>> rides on the catapult and glides down. Once it reaches the launching point of the catapult, it stamps hard and leaps into the vacuum like a snowboard jump.

The relative velocity of the catapult launch and the machine's own thrust out increases as compared to the mothership. Riddhe sees from the corner of the all-view monitor that the <<Nahel Argama>> is moving further and further away, and checks whether the laser signal is working. The laser signal can tell the ship its position and allows for coordination in the bridge. It's the only lifeline with Minovsky Particles all over the place. Without this, he will get lost in the wide outer space, and even shot by friendly fire. So no matter what, he has to check the laser signal. The training tells him that he can leave everything aside once he checks the air flow in the machine and his allies' positions. In this outer space where radar can't be used, what awaits one who loses communication will be a slow and drifting death.

The instructors who have been flying before the One Year War started, in the era of radar, would often remind them about this, but to the current generation that includes Riddhe, that's not even a form of teaching, just common knowledge. To the pilots who're learning how to fly in the sea of Minovsky particles, it's a given premise that they can't use radar, and it's as simple as not being able to breath in vacuum. Riddhe finishes his checking on the laser signal before the acceleration ends, checks the positions of his allies, and then lets the machine transform. The head of the <<ReZEL>> tucks in like a turtle, and the part that forms the chest is elevated together with the cockpit. The two arms are bent inwards, and the feet at the base are spread aside, keeping the parts above the knees on both sides. The shield that's equipped on the left wrist covers the head and two wrists, forming the lower body of the machine and making the <<ReZEL>> a non-human machine. It transforms into a space fighter jet that has the thruster group moved from the back to the back, the ones at the feet becoming the main thrusters—the 'aircraft' called Waverider.

The transformation merely took 0.5 seconds, and this kind of transformable mobile suit can only be made through a malleable mobile structure that can form a mobile suit's frame and a light but strong gundarium alloy. It has a complicated transformation frame, so the costs of making it are high, and it's a lot more complicated to

assemble it. However, its high mobility and wide use of being a transport plane that can carry out long-range attacks are enough to make up for its flaws. The thrusters are all focused in a single direction because of the transformation, and the <<ReZEL>> gets thrust that's far more than its own mass requires, which allows it to move other mobile suits too.

Once the transformation is complete, Riddhe moves the control stick to the left. He sees the <<Jegan>> no.5 quickly catch up after the <<ReZEL>> no.8 launched. The laser signals react for both parties to reach relative velocity. Doing a motion they've practiced hundreds of times, the arms of the <<Jegan>> grabs onto the hook on the <<ReZEL>>'s thrusters. At the same time, the interaction channel is online, and a coarse voice came through the wireless radio, (So my limousine's driving by the young lord." It's the pilot of the <<Jegan>> no.5, Juliet 5.

"Yeah, where are we going, dear guest?"

(Drive me to the gathering point of those 'Sleeves', and remember to drive safely.)

Riddhe steps on the gas without hearing him complete the sentence, and the thrusters let out white and hot glows. The machine frames of the <<ReZEL>> and the <<Jegan>> that looks like it's grabbing onto a beatboard accelerate (You got nerve…! I'm going to lodge a complaint to your dad!) Riddhe hears the scream from the wireless radio cheerily and gives a smile. *I should be able to do this,* he thought. He feels a lot more relaxed, and his body does the motions he was trained to do. *Even if we're starting a real fight, I can tackle this fearlessly. I have self-confidence, and for this, I paid double the effort anyone else made. I'm a real pilot.*

The feeling of acceleration when the <<ReZEL>> transforms into the Waverrider state is different from the mobile suit state. It's like he became a bullet and flew in a straight line, and it makes him feel like how he always stated his dream of becoming a pilot when he's young. Riddhe lets the machine turn and join Ian's squad. With squad leader Ian leading, 2 of the 4 waverride-state <<ReZELs>> are transporting <<Jegans>>. This looks just like a flying formation. *It's this*...just when Riddhe's feeling intoxicated by this feeling, he remembers that the biplane model is still in the cockpit, and frowns.

He wanted to take it to his room before launching, but forgot. He wrapped it up in a plastic bag, but it might be damaged if he accelerates too much. Riddhe looks over at where he left the model, and mutters 'forget it'.

I'll just check it when I go back. It's the same with the date with Mihiro, the more things I have to do once I get back to the ship, the better. Riddhe feels relaxed that he can still think about this, and focuses on maintaining formation.

In front of him is the shoal space region with countless blocks of remnants and stone. As he looks at the most up-to-date version map of space, the Ian's squad dodges the obstacles and head to the standby area. The battlefield, <<Industrial 7>>, can't be identified through the countless space dust.

Chapter 3[edit]

Part 1[edit]

In the quiet room, the old pillar clock is rocking away. It's a wooden pillar clock that seemed to be made in the old centuries.

It's 6pm. GONG GONG. The time's being reported as the sound echoes throughout the hall, and the girl—or rather, Audrey Burne—heads to the window and sees the outside scenery through the glass window. The panel-styled artificial sun has darkened, and the surrounding area is covered in darkness. The outdoor lights that's set in the courtyard lets out a weak light, and though it attracts a lot of flies, it can't shine into the large garden. She feels like she's looking into outer space that has very little light.

The forest on the outside is also submerged in darkness, and it looks like a black block that is differently darkened. The rows of trees that aren't rustling with the wind remain silent and still in the darkness, and it looks extremely unique. This looks like a natural environment, so the unnaturalness of the air-tight space where wind won't blow becomes all the more obvious. The lights of the streets, the rumbling of the vehicles, the noise brought about by people living…these things makes the colony feel like an artificial earth, so once the space colony lacks such things, it'll become an ordinary indoor scene again. Feeling really hurt, Audrey turns her eyes back into the room.

There is an old-styled wardrobe, an attached mirror, a twin-sized canopy bed; a tea table that can be brought to the balcony, plates that have a red tea teapot and cookies on them, and earthenware that's reflecting soft light. This seem to be a room prepared for female guests, and the windows and lighting inside the room have a luxurious color base, so one won't feel sick of looking at them for a long time. The room probably wasn't used for many years, but it's kept so tidy that it didn't give that feeling. As expected of a mansion belonging to

the Vist Foundation. Also, a servant just came by and let her enjoy a mini-dinner.

She, who has eaten the ‘real’ stuff ever since young, knew clearly that it wasn’t some packaged food. It must be some servant who’s often in this mansion or Cardeas’ personal chef who prepared this food. She wondered whether the food might be spiked, but after thinking that there’s no need to do this to a bird in a cage, Audrey enjoyed this meal. In the end, her filled stomach caused her body to slow down, and let her have the urge to lie down on the bed. It’s either that Vist Foundation’s reception was perfect or that she was being too crude.

It’s been more than 2 hours since she was brought to such a comfy room where she didn’t feel like she was watched. She has achieved the aim of meeting the person she has to meet and saying what she has to say, but what’s next? Cardeas merely listened silently and didn’t give a clear answer. Zinnerman and Marida’s movements were unknown, but since they know that she made contact with Vist Foundation, they will carry out the deal secretly. They will probably let the mobile suits remain on standby after considering that she’s a hostage.

If such sparks fly because of this, Cardeas will have to take her as a hostage. She feels that she has to leave this house and go back to the <<Garencieres>> on her own first, but she can’t go back without understanding Cardeas’ intent. If the deal is made peacefully, there will be no meaning to why she came here. Also, Audrey now has no self-confidence of being able to move through this residential area that’s surrounded by the dark forest, back to the port on the back of the colony.

From what she heard of Cardeas, Audrey believes that he’s someone she can recklessly get to approach and talk to, but she didn’t consider about what happens next. It was merely an excuse on Audrey’s part to say that there wasn’t much time, and she sighs and sits down on the chair. She drinks up the cold red tea and looks up at the painting. The background of the painting looks to be a mountainous region on Earth, and there are several herded sheep and a shepherd boy facing the front, not smiling at all.

The boy’s straightforward expression shows the labor of hard work, and also shows the wide world. Audrey suddenly remembers the name Banagher Links, and her heart aches. He wasn’t someone of the opposite gender Audrey likes, and she can’t even remember his face clearly, as only the touch of the hand remain etched on her skin. It’s not that he came because of a righteous cause or loyalty, but because

of emotions. The owner of that hand seems to resemble the shepherd boy in this painting. That seemingly obedient yet continues-to-chase kind of expression—

“It’s fine no matter who you are. Just say that you need me.”

The voice that was left beside her cut through the silence in the room and entered her heart. What was he saying? Audrey only felt surprised now, and grimaced slightly. It’s too reckless for someone she didn’t know for very long or even the background to say something like that, but for that moment, Banagher’s eyes were serious. His eyes look like they were yearning for something, just like the picture of the boy. If she didn’t deliberately say that she wanted to draw a line, she might be attracted by the light in his eyes. What happened to him after that? Did he go back to school safely?”

“Do I…need him?”

If that hand was pulling her, she would immediately leave this place. As Audrey harbored such a random thought, the bell rang, and it shocked Audrey.

She hurriedly sat properly and said ‘please enter’. She thought that it was an attendant who came to collect the tea set, but the one standing outside the wooden door was Cardeas Vist. Audrey feels that her skin is tensing up because of the anxiety, and got up to invite the leader of Vist Foundation in.

Cardeas, who said ‘excuse me’ as he entered the room, looked at the table. This is to see whether the guest is unsatisfied with the reception, and Audrey, who went through the same training, understood that. Before coming in, he must have talked to the servants and understood what meals she had. Audrey first spoke up, saying, “It’s nice.” This is an instinctive action she does based on etiquette and dignity, and Cardeas, who’s showing a smile as he said ‘it’s fine as long as it suits your tastes’, didn’t do anything else. He’s like a brave eagle tilting its head slightly, showing a smile that makes people drop their guards.

“I’ve changed the meeting point with your allies to this <<Magallanica>>.”

Cardeas prompted Audrey to sit down, and he sat opposite her. He put the notepad PC in his hand onto the table, and says, “They’ll be here soon. Once the job’s done, I’ll let you two meet, so please wait.”

This was basically declaring that he has no intention of ending this deal. Though she already predicted it, she couldn’t hide her disappointment once it became reality. “Can you please reconsider?”

Cardeas could only remain silent as he watched Audrey clasping her hands tightly under the table and having her voice tremble.

“Why? I heard that the ‘Laplace Box’ is the lifeline that gave the Vist Foundation its power, but handing such a thing over to us…”

“That’s because even if our fortune and prosperity continues on, we won’t be able to salvage the world when it becomes inapt completely.”

This was something she didn’t expect at all. Audrey repeated Cardeas words again as she saw his unwavering vision, “World, inapt…?”

“Peace and stability aren’t good for keeping. It will immediately become inapt if we don’t introduce some fresh air.”

“Are you saying that war can make the world evolve?”

Cardeas’ eyes twitched, and the smiled disappeared from his face. It seemed that these words were for real, and Audrey, whose head went hot from understanding this, stared at Cardeas’ face and says,

“I was born in a war, watched people grow up in a war, and watched many soldiers die to protect me.”

Cardeas looked down slightly and said calmly, “I suppose.” That heavy voice seemed like it could only resonate with such people, and seemed to be a form of sympathy to her. Audrey felt her mood worsening, but still finished off what she had to say,

“…It was really tragic. What’s born from this expectation is the arrogance of those who’re engrossed with peace.”

“Then, are you denying your own organization?”

“I’m not denying it, but Full Frontal is a dangerous man. If you hand him the ‘Laplace Box’, a lot of people will die.”

“Full Frontal. The man hailed as the second coming of the one they call the Red Comet…Char Aznable.”

Audrey knew that her eyes were showing a shaken belief, and she wanted to argue back, but couldn’t say anything, and lowered her head. Cardeas slowly got up and walked over to the window facing the dark courtyard.

“Without his existence, the ‘Sleeves’ will never become an organization with a military group’s standard. That’s something you can’t do.”

“I’ll admit that…”

She didn’t think that expanding rapidly as a military organization is the

best method. Even if they want to change the current situation, there has to be a change in methods. Audrey wanted to say something, but that was all she could, and this self-realization made her unable to say it out. She understands very well how ironic it will be for her to argue against war and militarism from her own standpoint. However, this isn't important. What she is trying to say is that the current direction they're headed to is very dangerous, but she can't explain what's dangerous about it. She has to clearly explain her instincts or feelings, but can't do so. This anxiety and helplessness continued to swirl in her, causing her to only sit here and tremble. If there is anything unnecessary for her to say, if there's some way she can let others know of what she thought of—

"You're a smart person, and you have your responsibilities that comes with your position, but you're still too young. I understand your feelings, but you won't be able to convince people like this until you become a real Newtype."

After a short moment of silence, Cardeas said this. However, Audrey was paying more attention to the word 'Newtype' than the admonition. She lifted her head and looked at Cardeas.

"Do you believe? That…"

"It's a must to continue believing, but sometimes, blood may have to be shed for the hope to continue."

Cardeas looked back at her and answered, and there was a faint glint in his shape eyes. Audrey's intuition was telling him that this guy was deliberately doing this.

Cardeas wasn't looking at what he will gain or lose immediately, but was taking action while looking at something much bigger. He believed that there was something he couldn't see and intended to open the 'box' which was a taboo. Audrey felt much more relieved than feel unhappy about this understanding. She even felt that it was worth it coming here to see this expression.

"Please go back. If the person who accepts this 'box' is just like what you imagine, the 'box' will never be opened."

"…What do you mean?"

"Because I did something. That's a fierce horse."

Smirking, Cardeas did some simple operations on the notepad PC and turned the screen over. Audrey couldn't help but gasp as she saw what was shown on it.

“This is…”

“The path to the ‘box’, or rather, the ‘key’…”

Cardeas then showed several photos and spoke. Audrey then realized now that the color of his eyes were similar to the shepherd boy in the painting.

Part 2[edit]

“Hey, you’re Banagher, right? Banagher Links.”

The girl who brought her face over without restraint has the smell of alcohol coming out from her mouth. Banagher realizes that his face is becoming stiff, but answers softly, “That’s me.”

“I heard what you did this morning. You stole a mini mobile suit and crashed into the park, right? That’s amazing. Tell me what you feel.”

Having a blurry looking expression, the girl puts her hand on Banagher’s thigh as he sits down on the sofa, and leans her exposed shoulders over. One can see the cleavage from under her shirt, but Banagher doesn’t feel anything special about it. The most he just feels is that he accidentally saw some skin that has spots on them, and feel that it’s not very clean to look at it closely. Banagher takes a gulp of cola from the glass and adjusts his sitting position, “Nothing…much to talk about.” And answers without looking back. “Uwa—wow, that’s so cool!” The girl’s scream matches the high decibels that fill the wide living room, piercing the ears.

“You’re not an obedient kid, but trying to act cool.”

“What is it, Asta? Have you become friends with him?”

The red-haired girl, who’s swaying her hips to the beat of the music, walks towards the girl called Asta and Banagher beside her before sitting down on the other side of Banagher. The recoil causes some of the cola to spill out, but the red-haired girl doesn’t seem to mind as she looks at Banagher with a gauging look. Banagher, who’s being sandwiched between the two girls, cringe back and drinks up the cola he doesn’t want to drink. He just feels distant. He, who’s being surrounded by the flushed-red girls, the heat that’s sticking onto his arms, the fast-paced music, the noise that’s piling in this void, and the stuffiness in the crowd, can only spend his time here slowly—

There are about 10 boys and girls making noise in front of them, dancing with the music and drinking alcoholic drinks. It’s just beer or whiskey-tinged cola, but it’s enough to make these teenage youths drunk. It seems that some people are using some legal drugs, as he

can see a blond person's eyes looking rather weird at the kitchen counter. The people gathering at the balcony are smoking, and the room with the door tightly shut is letting smoke through. It smells greasier than cigarettes, and it's most likely marijuana.

It's rumored that the people in private schools normally behave well, but go ridiculously wild once they get started; from the looks of it, this really is the case. If the owners of this house, Micott's parents see such a devastating scene, they will definitely roll blank white eyes; but luckily, they're on a vacation with their young son. That's why everyone held their breaths and watched Micott from behind when her parents called.

The Minovsky Particles interference today is rather serious, and the communication with their destination was immediately cut off. However, Micott, who calmly states that everything's fine at home, doesn't show any signs of being troubled. As everyone saw her stick her tongue out once she put down the phone and accepted everyone's cheers, one will doubt whether she's such a frivolous girl who's already used to do such things. Her father's a respected factory head, and the girl herself is a carefree person who would enter the technical school without hesitation. From that moment on, Banagher started to view her as a different creature altogether. Takuya, who's used to the current atmosphere and dancing around foolishly in the family bar with 2, and then 3 girls, looks like one of those irritating things that are gathered in this room.

This isn't the first time Banagher's taking part in such an event. In the vocational school hostel where he stays, it's commonplace to get someone to open a room and have some sort of party gathering. Even if he can't mix in fully like Takuya, Banagher believes that he can mix himself into the surrounding atmosphere like usual. It's not because these are strangers from a private school; and it's not just this party alone, as he can get himself involved in daily life before yesterday. However, the time now looks rather faded. He just feels that the gears that were spinning well even though they don't actually fit have stopped completely today, being completely loose. It's this kind of things that made Banagher anxious, frustrated. He shouldn't be blaming this on the people around him—Banagher hasn't lost such rationality yet.

That's why he set up an invisible wall and treats himself as a flower wall, but these brains that are intoxicated and relaxed by alcohol don't seem to understand his intent. Banagher starts to feel that the pressure that's building up in his heart continues to rise like a storm beating away and the uncomfortable body temperature surrounding

him. *I shouldn't be here.* A part of him is prompting him to hurry up and leave, and another part of him is warning him that it'll be a path of no return if he really leaves. In the end, he's only left with self-chiding in his heart, wondering why must he curl his tail and run off?

Will I wreck my future? Is it because of that 'no need'? I don't have any clear target to my own future, and I know that I don't have any power that makes people want me. My deceit made her say such things—

"You're rather famous in our school! I heard that there's a rather cute boy at the technical school."

The girl who finally squeezes in and looks at Banagher's eyes before talking. The eyes that are wet because of alcohol are so limp that one will wonder if she'll collapse with just a simple poke. Banagher remembers those adamant jade-colored eyes, and feels that both of them don't have the expressions of a human. However, he just feels unhappy about this feeling and remains silent.

"You're a transfer student, right? Which colony were you at before this?"

The girl called Asta brings her hand with the bracelet and puts it on Banagher's thigh. Banagher smells her breath that reeks of pizza and beer, and tells himself that this is daily life. It's a good thing that he's famous in a private school. *Let's just chit-chat with them at a suitable level, and get along with them while our student lives aren't lacking; and once we played enough, we'll be treated as treasure and become members of the thousands of Anaheim Electronics workers. This is the future you fear will be wrecked.*

He remembers his hometown. The people who took the wrong path all ended up like that. *Didn't mum always say this? She wants me to become an adult who understands how great an ordinary life is*—but with these words that continue to surge in his heart, Banagher refuted it. *Whenever mom teaches me such things, I just feel like something's 'missing'.* It's like his eyes were being shrouded, and something's being taken away from me. And today, that blindfold seems to slip. That's why he immediately saw a world he never saw before for an instant, a world where he didn't feel 'out of place'. The determined jade-colored eyes, the unicorn tapestry, and the mobile suit with the unicorn horn.

He started to feel difficulty in breathing. I can't breathe if I continue to remain here; let's go back. Where can I go breathe? Where's your resting place? This voice rang with the deep beats and the girls' squeals overlap each other "Don't be so quiet. Talk a bit." "Ah, do you have a girlfriend?" Amazing, you're really steady~" "Oi, Asta. His glass' empty. Pour some out for him."…

"DON'T BOTHER ME!!!"

The suffocating fear immediately exploded into high decibels. As he stood up, Asta, who was about to pour beer, was knocked aside, and the bottle hit a corner of the table and shattered. The two girls scream, and it's only a matter of time before all the gazes are focused on Banagher.

It's unknown which idiot helped to turn off the music and cause the atmosphere in the living room to be so bad that it can't be salvaged. Asta starts to cry, and the other girl stares at Banagher with a cold expression before saying, "What's with this guy…" Other voices then pop out, "Who's that guy?" "Feels bad." Banagher sees a few boys looking dangerously at him and lowers his head to look at Asta. He wants to apologize to her, but after seeing that she's crying like a kid instead of clearing the shattered bottle, he feels that it's stupid to feel sorry. *Cry all you want,* he thought.

"That's why I say don't invite the people from the vocational school."

Someone said that. Banagher pretends not to hear it, but a threatening voice came from the family bar, “Ahh? Who said that!?” With his back facing the girls that got up in fear, Takuya glares at everyone from the bar counter.

“Oi, Banagher! Hurry up and apologize!”

In this atmosphere that’s becoming even more heinous, Micott moves through the human wall and calls out. She doesn’t bother to care about what other people are doing as she merely cares about the stares. After hearing that voice, Banagher’s final sanity is gone, and leaves the scene wordlessly.

“Oi, Banagher!” Takuya calls him, but he ignores it and leaves the living room. Micott’s house include the two highest levels of the tower, and by climbing up the indoor stairs, one will reach the garden on the roof. The reason why Banagher climbed the stairs and head to the roof is merely because the stairs are nearer than the entrance. Anyway, he has a need to get out and bring in some fresh air to his blocked lungs.

The mansion is owned by Anaheim Electronics, built from the pillars supporting the artificial sun. The construct feels like litter stuck at the base when compared to the huge pillars that reach the artificial sun, but the building’s 10 levels high, and the unique thing is that the gravity will be lower the higher up one goes. It’s hard to tell the difference when the living room’s at the 9th level, but the gravity at the roof is lower when the 10th level itself is close to 0.9G.

Whether low gravity can prevent aging and keep people healthy is real or not, nobody knows, but mansions that are built to cater the rich families will be of different standards at different levels. Micott’s house is no exception as the level with low gravity has a bedroom and a gym, but this is the best playpark for drunk people. Banagher hurries up the room as he glances at the youths making a ruckus in the gym. On the way there, he suddenly starts to wonder about the situation outside, and looks at the ground from the window at the stairs.

Just as he thought, the limo-type high class electric car is parked outside the entrance of the mansion. This Vist Foundation limo has leather seats, high-class audio speakers, fridge, and even iced grape wine, and remains near there like a bodyguard after sending him from the ‘Snail’ to the technical school, which makes it look annoying. It’s low gravity, but Banagher feels his mood become heavy as he clicks his tongue before leaving the window.

The chairman instructed us to ensure your safety. As he sat on the limo, two suit-clad men that gives the strong vibe and disciplined

hunters wouldn't accept any other logic. Even if he tell them that they're irritating and to just send me back, they won't take action without their owner's command. Cardeas Vist, that authority of this distinguished adult wraps around me like air. The moment he thought that he couldn't escape the man's grasp, Banagher just feels that it was harder to breath and takes 3 steps up the stairs like they're two steps. The couple that are hugging at the stairs near the roof seem to be grumbling in their hearts that he's being a spoilsport.

"Fuu—n, so these people are watching."

Through the handrail gap, Micott looks down at the limo downstairs and said. Her back profile is saying that she knew what was going on, but she hasn't forgiven Banagher, who puts his hands in his coat pocket and grumbled,

"They're looking for trouble, sending such an obvious looking car like that!"

He puffed his mouth as he said that, and then turn his eyes to the artificial sun pillar that's standing behind it. At the center of the room, the 3km pillar that passes through the clouds enter the darkness midway through and become a shadow blocking the starry sky. Of course, those aren't real stars, but a starry sky created from the lights on the inner wall on the other side.

The pillars are all set at regular points all over the inner wall, supporting the artificial sun that stretches out long—no, the artificial sun pillar is located in the center axis in a zero-gravity area, and so it should be more correct to say that it's fastened. The roof of the building is latched onto the base like an annual ring, and each area separated by shrubs, allowing people to do whatever they insist to do. For Micott's house, a half is used as a swimming pool, while the other half is used as a family garden.

In this place that looks like a corner of the roof with the annual ring being sliced open, Micott and Takuya have been talking to him for more than 10 minutes. Thinking about this closely, there's a lot of things he couldn't say easily, but he can't try to sugarcoat things when both of them are angry. Banagher can only tell the truth. It's better to say out what's in the heart; as he faces the duo who left the party midway to look at him, the inner pressure that's almost about to blow his heart out is quietened down. He remembers the girl called Asta, and starts to feel sorry for her. In that end, that's all I'm worrying about. Thinking about this, what happened for the entire day suddenly starts to feel less realistic, and what's left is an emptiness that pierces

through the hand.

“But that’s great. Chairman Cardeas is a big shot in the financial world. What kind of person is he?”

But Takuya’s words sound like he doesn’t care at all, causing Banagher to feel unhappy and think that he hasn’t understood the situation at all “Nothing much. Just an ordinary adult. Just looks impressive.” Banagher said with a stiff voice, “Un, that’s not just an ordinary impressiveness.” Takuya yawns.

“But because of this, you left that girl called Audrey, so you can only admit defeat.”

That’s some vexing feeling in Micott’s words, causing Banagher to gasp “What, wha…” and try to found a voice out. Micott let go of the handrail and turns around.

“Being all fidgety and even taking your anger on my friend, that’s not manly at all. If you’re so worried, go snatch her back, idiot.”

Banagher can’t think of anything to retort back, and Micott walks towards the stairs without waiting for his reaction. Banagher’s mind immediately thinks that all the girls will think this way, but still spoke up “Since when is it that simple!” The empty protest bounces off Micott’s back and lands on the surface of the swimming pool before scattering.

“Don’t be mad. She’s just being jealous.”

As he watches Micott pass through the stairwell doors , Takuya spoke up. On hearing such unexpected words, Banagher asks “Ha? What do you mean?”

“You’re way too slow. Never mind, don’t bother. It’s not that simple anyway.”

“What?”

“You might be expelled. Micott’s the daughter of a factory manager. Looking at her like this, she might not have suffered much, unlike us.”

Takuya gave a loud hiccup as he says that. The alcohol’s making his face red, but his eyes look more awake than usual.

“Once we hang on until graduation, we’ll become official members of Anaheim. This is the one good chance for people like us. Don’t ruin this just because you’re mad.”

Takuya’s tea-colored hair that’s swaying with the slightly warm wind, and the side of his face seem to be looking at the night scene of the

colony as he says this. At this moment, *Ah, this guy's already an adult,* Banagher suddenly feels this way and can't say anything. he feels that between him and Takuya, there's a wall that's more thorough from a certain angle as compared to the one with Micott, and feels that the world around him is leaving him.

This is the familiar feeling he forgot once he met Audrey Burne—the 'shifted' feeling. Banagher feels pain in the chest and breathing difficulties. He turns his eyes away from Takuya's side face, leans on the handrail, and looks up at the geometry patterns painted by the street lights and electric cars. The Foundation's limo is still at the same spot, just as what he saw just now.

Banagher grabs onto the handrail tightly and looks up behind the large pillar, the airtight wall on the side facing the moon. The expansion works during the day cause the airtight wall to become further, and it's impossible to see the gate leading to the 'snail' as it seem to be covered by the thick atmosphere and clouds.

Part 3[edit]

It's 7pm, and the people being expected appeared.

"Welcome to the <<Magallanica>>. I'm the leader of the Vist Foudnation, Cardeas Vist."

The gang of people who went down the lift probably didn't expect the leader to personally come out and invite them. Everyone gasps, but Cardeas notices that amongst the 4 people, the bearded man is the only one who recovers faster from the shock as he looks around to grasp the current situation.

Is this man the captain, the brain behind these movers the 'Sleeves' sent? Just as he's trying to confirm this, the mouth that's covered with beard starts to move, "I'm the captain of the <<Garencieres>>, Suberoa Zinnerman." And reaches out his hand with the joints looking very obvious. Cardeas holds his hand too, and clearly concludes that this is either the hand of a thoroughly trained soldier or someone who's been through a long prison life.

"We're really awed that the leader himself will come to invite us."

"This is the fate of handing over our Foundation. We can't just leave this to anyone else."

As they exchange looks with each other and started talking, Zinnermans takes out a hand-written letter from his old leather coat pocket. After seeing that it has the signatures of Monaghan Baharo

and Full Frontal, Cardeas looks over at the three men accompanying Zinnerman, and asks, “Is everyone here?” Zinnerman’s eyebrows never twitch as he says,

“Some are still on the ship, so if you want a list…”

“No, there’s no need.” There was no response about anything regarding ‘her’, and Cardeas’ first impression is that he’s not an easy man to deal with as he hands the handwritten letter over to Gael and smiles at them, “Please, allow me to lead the way in.” and leads them down the long corridor.

The office building that’s located in the rotating residential area of the <<Magallanica>> has a centrifuge force for easy walking. The room that looks undecorated like an office is like a completely different world as compared to the Vist’s villa that’s also indoors. However, there’s nothing to be picky about in terms of safety procedures. Even though they will have to carry out many checks here, the other party’s the elites sent over by the ‘Sleeves’. Cardeas doesn’t even want to accommodate them and rest in the villa.

Because of ‘her’, they’re all being suspicious of each other. That’s why Cardeas change the location to ensure safety. He looks at Gael, who’s following him from behind, and whispers in a volume only they can hear, “How’s the port?” Gael’s large body immediately catches up and whispers back, “No problems.”

“The people outside the ship have returned back. I don’t know what’s the situation inside the ship, but it seems that they’re waiting on standby just in case.”

This is the report made by the contacts watching the <<Garencieres>>. The people who got off the ship to look for ‘her’ are now back on…in other words, Zinnerman believes that ‘she’s here. The one on standby to prepare for anything is likely the mobile suit that buried the Londo Bell patrol squad. Cardeas, who was intending to look at the other party’s attitude before deciding when to return ‘her’, focuses on Zinnerman and company behind him. At this moment, Gael suddenly asks, “Do we recall the guards watching over that kid?” and this question caused Cardeas to be unable to react for a while.

Since the ‘Sleeves’ pursuers have returned to the ship, there’s no need to send anyone to protect Banagher Links. “Just wait a while, nobody can ensure that there aren’t any other threats in the colony.” Gael hears this and wordlessly nods his bald head. Cardeas recalls the face of the boy he just had a glimpse of a few hours ago.

He laughed at himself before, thinking that they will meet one day, but delayed on because of work, and today, that face appeared right in front of him—that face is a lot more mature than how it look in the photo; Cardeas laughed wryly in his heart. He's probably being hated for being able to say such rigid things. This is the carelessness of men. No matter how much experience they gain or no matter how powerful they become, they will become weak at that moment. It feels like the expression that was close to him saw through everything, and he was scared…

The office corridor that's cleared out is so quiet that only a few people's footsteps can be heard. As they go through this short time that's starting to decide on the fate of the organization, Cardeas continues to face the tumor in his life.

Part 4[edit]

It's 7:04pm. The electronic interference brought about by the Minovsky particles is becoming stronger, and even the physical sensors are having interference. Savoir has been going through countless reset operations while hiding in the cockpit of the <<Geara Zulu>> that's hidden behind the solar panel.

Even after rebooting the system, the physical sensors haven't recovered at all. Savoir stares at the screen that's full of noise and forcefully slams the console on the linear seat. This is just a simple electronic interference, yet it's causing the physical sensors to malfunction. Something has to be wrong here. For sensors, even if the Minovsky Particles are thick enough for combat levels, it can still detect a radius of 20km. In this outer space, this distance can be closed in immediately, but it's still very important in such a surveillance mission. And the reason why it can't work is either the clouds of Minovsky particles were too thick or the sensor's protection malfunctioned.

"Really, it's because we're using cheap stuff…!"

It's impossible for the Minovsky particles density to increase so much that the sensors can malfunction unless someone deliberately scatters them. Savoir completely assumes the reason to be the latter and starts muttering to him. It's not complete, but the 'Sleeves' still have enough forces to be called an army, and can use such new mobile suits. However, there's a huge problem in terms of the funding. Most of their equipment are handed down from the old army, and the replacements aren't considered ample. It's a new machine, but the <<Geara Zulu>> still has a control panel in the form of the ball-shaped armlaycer, and this is to make use to the old-machine's OS. It's easy to let the hand

slip off the controls, so criticism like this are the reason why the Federation army isn't using this anymore.

It's because of this situation that Vist Foundation's strange request brought about a glimmer of hope. Unexpectedly, just when the deal's about to begin, the sensor malfunctions. Savoir concentrates on the small camera image that's appearing on the left side. Right now, he can only rely on the visual information—his own eyes to witness this. through the all-view monitor, he's looking at the CG starry space that's a lot brighter than the actual one, and is about to take a sip off the packet-tubed coffee when a white glow flashes past his eyes.

"A mini-mobile suit…no, that's not it."

For a mini mobile suit, the thrust light is way too great. Savoir steps onto the pedal lightly to investigate the rock that's glowing. The mini camera capabilities can't allow it to observe, so it's faster to let the machine move forward slightly and use the main camera to look at it. Savoir cautiously moves the control panel, and lets the <<Geara Zulu>> that's hidden in the gap of the materials move to the protrusion of the solar panel. The head of the machine pokes out from the shadow of the solar panel, and immediately a large object flies past the head, and a siren rings throughout the cockpit.

"What…!?"

He immediately ducks his head and let the machine arm reach for the beam rifle that's hanging at the waist. A mobile suit with a thruster unit behind it flies above the <<Geara Zulu>>. The distance is less than 100m, and it seems to be in inertial flight mode as the thrusters aren't flashing. There's no need to use the CG to compare with the data as Savoir observes the intricate parts of the machine that just grazed past.

The beam rifle remains at the firing position, and the sky-blue object that seems to be moving slowly has a streamlined frame. It's the transformable mobile suit of the Earth Federation army. The comparison results show that it's the RGZ-95, and it's said to be an enemy machine assigned to Londo Bell—

"That close…!?"

His body is sweating all over, and his heart is beating faster. He's cursing his eyes for looking there as he watches the enemy machine approach with his pilot eyes. Savoir reaches for the communication controller. No matter how thick the Minovsky particles, it's possible to send voices within 20km. He has to report back to the

<<Garencieres>> before the enemy detects him, and he has to consider what to do next, whether to fight or run. However, his fingers freeze once he's about to touch the control.

Mobile suits that are shooting thruster lights one after another are floating near the rocks. They're appearing on the mini surveillance camera, and scattering in all directions to surround Industrial 7. There're 4 RGZ-95s and 2 RGM-89s; he can tell at first glance that there are 6 of them. Savoir sees one machine fly past the mini surveillance camera cable and parks itself above the <<Geara Zulu>>. His heart then sinks.

"What's with these guys…"

It's definitely not a training drill. These mobile suits are slowly increasing the thickness of Minovsky particles and slipped in from behind the space dust. This must be a tactical action in battle—and it also seems like a squad's leading the forces to surround the colony in a large scale battle. If they're setting up so many units, it's possible to imagine that the reinforcements are advancing, and there might even be a fleet on standby behind. There must be some definite information, some enemy must have definite basis over this information to mobilize such fighting force.

We've been had. Savoir firmly believes, but can't touch the control of the communication panel. He can't call out when there's a RGZ-95 beside him, separated only by a solar panel. The solar panel's microwaves and the Minovsky particles are able to hide the heat source of the <<Geara Zulu>>, but his existence will be discovered by the enemy once he does a wireless communication, and the source of the electric signal will be detected. No matter how he tries to escape, he'll only become a martyr victim of the beam rifle.

Should I take action? The fingers that are on the sphere control are stiff. Savoir answers himself, *no, even if I take down this unit, other enemy units will spot me. This is just telling the enemy that the 'Sleeves' are in ambush, and the <<Garencieres>> will be in danger.* Even if he contacts them, it'll be meaningless if he can't escape.

What should I do? Just when he's repeating the same words in his mind, Savoir instinctively ducks as the enemy unit flies above him. The finger that's on the ball control exerts force, and the machine arm of the <<Geara Zulu>> jerks as the finger is holding onto the beam rifle's trigger. Most likely, the toe end of the enemy unit hit a cable of the mini surveillance camera as static appears on the window.

Please don't find us. Savoir clasp his trembling hands and prays to the god he never believed in before.

Part 5[edit]

Marida senses Savoir's nervousness. More accurately, it's the familiar presence rising in the midst of the large number of people inside and outside the colony.

On the retaining deck of the <<Garencieres>>, the <<Kshatriya>> is fastened by the fixates. Marida hears Savoir's presence from through the thick armor, and at the same time, feels that the cold and shrilling pain of the countless thoughts close in. The psycommu that's installed on the machine increases the senses' reaction. However, the chill that enters her pores are different from the signal feedback as they become even clearer, slithering in like countless snakes under the skin, forming a very uneasy feeling.

In that chilling uneasiness, she identifies the body warmth and knows where the fearful Savoir is. Marida takes off the helmet of the suit and expand her senses out. The complicated emotions that are released out and spreads throughout the space colony accepts the emotions that came rushing in from outside. The tightly shut eyes slowly open.

"The enemy's here…!"

This isn't an ambiguous feeling. Marida activates the reactor of the <<Kshatriya>> and grabs onto the ball-shaped control. The mono-eye of the <<Kshatriya>> lets out a glow, and the machine twitches slightly.

Part 6[edit]

"In other words, you're not handing us the <<Laplace Box>> itself, but the key to opening it?"

He has no intention of believing that lost expression on Zinnerman's face completely. Under that appearance of a thoroughly trained and gruff soldier, there's a calculative heart inside. Cardeas continues to drink the red tea that's mixed with brandy and answers, "Yes, are there anything you're unhappy with?" "It's more like I don't understand instead of being unhappy." Zinnerman scratches his head, and his

expression as he answers is one full of doubt.

“That’s because we don’t know what’s this <<Laplace Box>>.”

The one who spoke behind Zinnerman is a man with blond short hair, standing like a bodyguard. The man who calls himself Flaste Schole isn’t sitting on the sofa as he gives a cautious look like the other two men. Of course, behind him, Cardeas has Gael and their subordinates watching all of Flaste’s actions. The dangerous looking men are all separated by the table, and it’s a guessing game being played in this reception room. Both of them are silent, not even looking at each other, and yet wary of each other’s existence—

It’s been 5 minutes as they meet in this plain reception room that didn’t even have anything other than plants, not even a painting. This man called Zinnerman hasn’t really spoken up, and his expression is wavering at times. Cardeas feels that he doesn’t want to reveal his trumps in this situation. He wants to see what this hard-to-deal-with man is like, what his real ‘face’ is like.

“But the higher-ups of the ‘Sleeves’ recognize the value of the <<Box>> and sent a good assistant like you too.”

As he takes a sip from the red tea with some anxiety, Cardeas swung a light jab. Zinnerman shows a mechanical wry smile and says,

“I’m just the runner. For our current state in the organization, the runners aren’t supposed to be taking important missions.”

As he faces the light black glow hidden in the eyes, Cardeas thinks: *there’s a reaction.* The faint glow immediately vanishes, and Zinnerman lazily leans on the sofa.

“If there’s bait right in front, they won’t check the specifics. So if there’s poison or a hook onto it…”

The smile disappears from Zinnerman’s face as his eyes again show such an expression. Cardeas took a strike after taking this exchange of blows, and he clearly hears his heart pounding faster.

“The higher-ups will be very disappointed.” Zinnerman chuckles, and that killing intent that even Gael, who was behind, reacted to, disappeared out of a sudden. “However, even if it’s like this, we can’t do anything to the famous Vist Foundation.”

That smiling face shows that he has gone through a lot, and shows some form of self-defeatist attitude. However, his expression isn’t showing any smile. His expression is saying, *try something funny and I’ll kill you.* This is the man’s ‘face’. Zinnerman’s nature as a soldier of

a defeated country. Cardeas laughs at himself for being bitten back as he gives a smirk. Good, now I can get into the main point—

“Captain, do you believe in the existence of Newtypes?”

Cardeas says as he puts the cup of red tea back onto the table. Zinnerman’s hard rock-like eyes shook, “Well…” his tone has some doubt.

“In the middle of a battlefield, I did experience such a power that can only be explained as such.”

That vague attitude of not wanting to answer straight on makes Zinnerman’s beard look more cordial. Having gotten the satisfaction of taking revenge, Cardeas smiles, “Power. As expected of someone who experienced this.”

“The first top-notched political philosopher in the Universal Century, Zeon Zum Deikun came up with this Newtype theory. This is truly ‘power’, humans who enter space unlock their hidden potentials while getting used to the wide space, expanding their knowledge, senses,

insight, make completely communications without mistakes, understanding each other; this is the revolution of humanity…the embryonic period of 'Newtypes'. That's why humanity has to leave this cradle called earth. The residents of space, who felt that they were second-rate humans, found their future in the deep valley of space… and then, that war happened."

The doubt vanishes from Zinnerman's expression. Cardeas looks back at his cautious expression, and continues,

"The One Year War. The Republic of Zeon declared the independence of spacenoids and initiated a direct clash with the Earth Federation… the one that triggered the start of the war is the Zabi family, who assassinated Zeon Deikum and sat on the throne of emperor. However, Zeon became famous as a country's name, and the name, and even the core thoughts on Zeonism has spread throughout humanity. It can be said that even when the war ended, the Federation has been fearing this 'power' they couldn't see. It's a 'power' that reveals the special rights of those privileged ones on Earth, and a 'power' that causes the spacenoids that were as good as abandoned to awaken. At the same time, it's a 'power', that can reverse the upper hand in the power struggle between Earth and space, one that can cause the Federation's order that was maintained for almost 100 years to collapse.

During these years, the Federation focused on fighting this invisible 'power'. They released humans who may be Newtypes and banned all sort of thoughts related to the thinking of Newtypes. On the other hand, though they created public enterprises that research on Newtypes, these are places for mad scientists to carry out their human experiments. They merely extracted the aspect of Newtypes being soldiers and artificially developed enhanced pilots."

He sees that Zinnerman's poker face is showing signs of cracks. That defeated country of his created Newtype-use weapons earlier than the Federation—the psycommu. If the artificially enhanced Newtype abilities have shown signs of development, maybe he saw a real example of a 'human experiment'. Cardeas' eyes look down, pretending not to notice Zinnerman wavering.

"This overbearing pressure caused the warlords to look up and create the inner struggle called the Gryphs Conflict. Coupled with the two Neo Zeon Wars…the Federation's worn out, but if there's no academic definition that confirms that Newtypes exist, the Federation can gain an ally to achieve the final victory. Do you know what it is?"

Zinnerman answers "Time?". *This man is very sharp.* "That's right."

Cardeas smiles.

“Humans’ hearts change easily, and the public often forgets. It’s true that people who’re like Newtypes do exist, but they can only use that supernatural-like prediction ability as outstanding pilots and got their names recorded in the annals of history. Amongst the definitions Zeon Daikum gave, if we go by the one about ‘understanding each other without mistakes’, they’re the group of people who’re the furthest from that theory. The public, which only wants the outcome, is already sick and tired of this Newtype theory that is only a possibility. The name Newtype is now like taking down a king, and right now, only battle records, movies and novels will mention them. To decent politicians and scholars, this is even a taboo.”

Besides, this isn’t something that should be discussed seriously in such a situation. Cardeas can tell from Zinnerman’s expression that he’s trying his best to listen to this conclusion, and opens his lips that were wet by the red tea before continuing,

“Zeonism lost its element just like that, and the spacenoids’ demonstration for self-independence was all wasted. It’s like how in the old centuries, where capitalism defeated communism. The Earth Federation defeated this bottle of poison caused Zeonism. But, what’s next? All that’s left is the closure called stability. The hierarchy wars amongst the spacenoids didn’t even start as they were all wiped out before they even organized themselves, and the Federation government continue to maintain dominion. As the Republic of Zeon returns it’s self-independence in UC 100, people will even forget the name Zeon.

You want to do something before that happens, and we don’t feel secure with such a future…”

After finishing his dialogue, Cardeas finishes up the remaining red tea; Zinnerman, who was looking at him straight on, suddenly lowers his head and laughs.

He laughed louder and louder, looking up and laughing so loudly that the voice rang through the room. Before Flaste and the rest can even show doubtful looks, Zinnerman cheerily says, “I see, so we both have the same benefits and costs here.” And pats his knee.

“So you’re going to throw a rock into the still water surface…is this the real reason the Vist Foundation’s handing us the <<Laplace Box>>?”

In his laughing expression, there’s a little glint of killing intent, and Cardeas smiles back at him.

“But is this really alright? If you’re handing the <<Laplace Box>> over to us, the Foundation will lose it’s co-existence with the Federation government.”

“There are always risks in doing business.”

“That’s true. No matter whether it’s the <<Box>> or the key…the thing you hand us may have a signal beacon, and the chances of you grasping our location isn’t zero.”

“This is given for free. If you don’t believe so, please take it back.”

“Don’t get angry. Don’t the people in the past used to say that the things that are free are the scariest?”

He’s giving a relaxed smile, but his body is even stiffer now. Cardeas again realizes that this man is hard to deal with, and looks at Zinnerman in the eyes.

“I just don’t think the leader of the Vist Foundation will help do such a thing. But it’s natural for us to become even more suspicious, and I managed to save my own life like this, so I don’t intend to change this habit.”

Though he’s crude in his words, his sharp stare is looking over. I don’t believe this is simply a business deal. Tell me the truth. Is it really like this? Cardeas lips show a smile, and says,

“You’re a smart man, and a bold one at that.”

These were undoubtedly words from the heart. “Thanks for the praise.” Zinnerman immediately answers back.

“But I can’t reveal everything here. This is a dangerous item.”

“That’s true, since it’s something that can overturn the Federation’s power…”

“I’m not looking at it in that way. This is a fact. That thing has the power to change the future.”

Zinnerman narrows his eyes, and behind him, Flaste and company are showing tense expressions. They just got this most important information they never knew of, the contents of the <<Box>>. Cardeas feels that they’re tensing up, and continues cautiously,

“No, I should say that it has the power to get back the future that was originally meant to be. But this isn’t something any normal person can continue. If it’s messed up, it will have the power to destroy the world.”

“So you’re giving us the key to test it out…is this what you mean?”

“It’s hard for people to trust others. Only the actions and outcome can prove the nature of others. It’s best if you have the power to distinguish the truth in this world.”

“The power to distinguish the truth of the world…sounds like Newtypes.”

Zinnerman said it out slowly as if he’s checking what he just answered. Good answer, Cardeas affirmed with a smile.

“On the other hand, those who only insist on only one of their own narrow ways will never see the contents of the <<Box>>.”

Zinnerman sighed and says, “One thing…?” “Well, for example…” Cardeas strokes his chin and then looks at Zinnerman’s eyes,

“The revival of Zeon.”

Zinnerman’s only reaction is to twitch his eyebrows. He hides the emotions that swelled in him under his skin and remains silent. Cardeas closes his mouth. Both of them look at each other, and the reception room enters a lull of silence.

The next sentence will decide this man’s value. Cardeas waits for his reply, but is disappointed because of the phone ring. Zinnerman focuses on his phone, and he can only look over.

It’s definitely not a small matter if there’s a call to this room at this moment. Cardeas remains calm and looks at Gael, who picks up the phone. Gael doesn’t look shaken, but as he hangs up the phone, the face he shows to Cardeas is full of tension. Cardeas excuses himself from Zinnerman and the rest before leaving his seat, and whispers to Gael in the corner of a room.

“The command module called over. Londo Bell’s requesting to dock the <<Magallanica>>.”

They’re here. Cardeas was already mentally prepared for this, but feels that it shouldn’t be possible. He asks calmly, “What’s the matter?” “Seems like counter-terrorist inspection. Gael whispers.”

“I’ve already requested the other side to contact Anaheim itself, but from the forceful attitude on the other side, it seems that the mobile suit squad has surrounded the colony.”

“What about the contact with the army?”

“We’re trying now…”

But we can't possibly expect. Both of them been in the Federation army before, he could understand what Gael was being anxious about. The way developments went so quickly isn't something that can be dealt with privately. The Federation will normally drag its fat body, and even operating a vehicle requires complicated procedures. However, if the upper-ups are all in unison, their movements will be faster and carry out such organization with amazing execution. Of course, the higher-ups aren't just the upper echelon of the group, but also those commanders who intend to become senators once they retire and the supporting senators, the leadership group of people who're helping the commanders in obtaining military goods.

The problem is, even though he should be one of the 'higher-ups', he couldn't detect Londo Bell's movements. Cardeas turns his head slightly and looks at Zinnerman. It seems that the ship left at the dock gave a signal, and he's listening to the report from the handheld wireless set. Have they detected that Londo Bell's here? For a moment, he wonders whether these people were the ones who brought the enemies here, but that's impossible. Even if they were tailed, a Federation ship won't look for trouble with Vist Foundation without talking it through with the 'higherups'.

"Martha…"

He remembers his own younger sister who was married to the leadership family of Anaheim Electronics, the Carbine family. She, who is 6 years younger than him, once fearlessly said: Since humanity gave birth to political marriages, women will have the right to play with authority. The 'higher-ups' mobilization of the army to prevent the handing over of the <<Box>> definitely involves her somehow.

"What are we going to do?" Gael asks. Cardeas intends to respond, but he's interrupted by another voice "Is this one of your tricks too?" Zinnerman holds onto the speaker in one hand and looks over.

"Most certainly not. I'm thinking of asking if you were tailed, but there won't be an agreement."

"I agree. It's really hard for people to trust others."

Zinnerman says without emotion as the smile on his face vanishes. To them, the situation is such that the Foundation is an accomplice of the army. Gael wants to step forward as Flaste shows a look of killing intent. Cardeas raises his hand to prevent both sides from taking action. There's no benefit for either side if we fight. He wanted to let everyone calm down, but gasp due to the sudden shock.

ZUN… A deep sound that could barely be heard echoed far away, and the teacup that's placed on the table trembles. The floor, walls and even the air shakes with it. This isn't a tremor focused at one point, but an impact that spreads throughout the colony, causing this <<Magallanica>> to jerk.

Most likely, an explosion caused the reaction. He can't help but look at the ceiling, and then looks at Zinnerman. His eyes are saying that this is really an unfortunate development of events. He raises the wireless speaker in his right hand and points the protrusion of the antenna over. Obviously, this isn't an ordinary one, and Cardeas can only clench his fists hard as he faces this worst scenario.

Part 7[edit]

In fact, all this was caused by an accident. The one who took action first was Savoir, hidden alone behind the solar panel and surrounded by enemies.

He continues to hide from Londo Bell that's surrounding him, and if he sends a signal of the <<Garencieres>>, he will be found and shot. However, even if he prepares himself to die, the fact that Londo Bell discovers the enemy won't change at all.

He can either bet on whether the <<Garencieres>> won't get discovered, or immediately fight his way out, but both options are very risky. Just when Savoir's hesitating, something unexpected happened. The foot of the RGZ-95 <<ReZEL>> unit 03 that's resting on the solar panel touches the mini camera the <<Geara Zulu>> let out.

The mobile suit has a system that can pass the sound sources surrounding the armor to the pilot. The pilot of the 3rd unit <<ReZEL>>, codenamed R003 lets it main camera look over at the feet. The small surveillance camera is only about 10cm big, and the fine cable that's extended out is connected to the <<Geara Zulu>> that's receiving the transmission. It's hard to tell with the light being reflected off the solar panel. The pilot merely thinks that it's a shrapnel, but right now, to Savoir's seeing a 20m tall giant looking down at him. The enemy's machine visor lights the eyes up, seemingly saying, *I found you.*

Savoir instinctively moves the mechanical arm, and the <<Geara Zulu>> pulls out the beam rifle. He presses the firing key on the control panel, and put the <<Geara Zulu>>'s index finger on the gun's trigger. The fading MInovsky particles are being released from the E-Pace—the magazine for handheld beam rifles, and are compressed inside the gun, turning into hi-energy mega-particles are shoot out from the beam

rifle's barrel. The Minovsky particles core fusion created the mega-particles, and these in turn shoot out from the machine gun-type beam rifle; not in a concentrated form, but in a rapid-fire form. The beams that's shot out like a machine gun attacks the Romeo 003 machine's frame.

If a rifle-type shot can be called a straight punch, the beam machine gun can be considered continuous jabs as they hit the <<ReZEL>> from point blank range. The pink bullets hit the leg to the abdomen, and many charred black bullet holes appear on the Romeo 003's frame. Even though the reactor isn't destroyed, the cockpit's been hit directly, and the pilot's boiled before he can even react. The <<ReZEL>> that lost its pilot is short-circuited inside, giving off lots of sparks, and becomes some debris that floats in the shoal space region.

Savoir doesn't have the time to check whether the machine's shot down as he lets his own machine leave the solar panels. Since the battle has started, it'll be his death if he remains in the same place. If that's the case, he can only try his best to lure the enemy's machines and create a chance for the <<Garencieres>> to escape. He won't have the time to respond once he reports to the main squad.

"No wonder the conditions were so good. We definitely fell for a trap…!"

Savoir steps on the pedal and stares at the enemy's machines; not thinking about anything else at all. However, to the mobile suit squad that's launched from the <<Nahel Argama>> they feel that they're the bunnies who fell into the trap.

(IT'S THE 'SLEEVES'! MOVING TOWARDS THE INDUSTRIAL AREA!)

The pilots' voices echo through the wireless communicators once they knew that their ally was shot down, and the mobile suit that's assigned to the area all start to search for the enemy. That tense and confusing atmosphere spreads all around through static and wireless communicators, and enters Riddhe's ears while he's remaining on standby.

"The remnants of Zeon just don't learn…!"

He gripped onto the control joystick hard and says this. Even after the One Year War and the two Neo Zeon war, the 'Sleeves' are still carrying out terrorist attacks on the Earth's celestial sphere—the remnants of Neo Zeon. The radar signal on the ally machine

disappeared, and before they can realize what's the meaning behind this, squad leader Ian's command came through the wireless communicator (Romeo 002 warning all units, watch your surroundings.) Riddhe looks at the all-view 360 degrees styled monitor. There may be other enemies hiding in the surrounding space dust. On hearing the pilots growling at each other through the wireless radio; Mihiro and the other operators practically shouting and hollering, it struck him that Romeo 003 was shot down. It's just that simple, no dramatic flair, just the reporting of death through the laser signals…

And Savoir's not being caught up with such sad emotions as his <<Geara Zulu>> shoots the beam rifle, holding off the enemy suits that are coming over as he flies to the outer walls of <<Industrial 7>>. He intends to lead the enemies into the microwaves near the solar panel, 'burn' the electronic equipment, stick near to the to the wall of the colony and escape to the industrial area where many civilian ships are.

The large cylinder is floating in vacuum, having become the second home of humanity—he has to damage the metal exterior. There's a sense of morality seeping inside him and the enemy. He doesn't want to use the colony as a shield, but having considered the difference in numbers on both sides, Savoir can't think of whether this is a good plan or not. Savoir's <<Geara Zulu>> flies past the spinning wall, and soon reaches the civilian block. The mobile suits of <<Nahel Argama>> can't snipe him, and it seem that both of them can only let Savoir's machine fly further, but the sudden attack of two units cause things to change.

Two <<ReZEL>> units, Romeo 005 and 007 transform into the waverider form, and the thrusters that are all gathered on the same point let out light. Both units have to make one huge turn to avoid the microwaves to catch Savoir's machine, but the <<ReZELs>> that transform into space jet fighters have acceleration ability that the <<Geara Zulu>> has no chance of matching. The two units reach the industrial area first and start to shoot at the <<Geara Zulu>>, which is at the colony wall.

"Fast…!"

The optical axis of the beam rifle hits Savoir's unit left leg, breaking off the part below the knee. The cockpit jerks violently, and the all-view monitor is flashing warning messages. The Velcro fasteners that detected the damage increases the suction, but Savoir's body still leaves the seat as the helmet's buried in the airbags that were shot out from the console. Savoir lifts his head up, and the airbag's sucked back in as the all-view monitor shows the <<ReZEL>> unit that's flying

from below. Savoir instinctively fires the beam rifle. Once the beam weapon hits, the victim will not even have the time to feel death. It's over once he's hit, and he will be evaporated once he's hit by the beam rifle. Savoir's telling himself in his mind, I'm alive, I'm still alive, and continues to fire the trigger. The <<ReZEL>> continues to fly horizontally and dodge the bullets, transforming back into the mobile suit type when meeting with a <<Geara Zulu>> and uses the power of the acceleration to swing the beam saber down.

The <<Geara Zulu>> loses its right arm together with the rifle, and the other <<ReZEL>> attacks from above, swinging the hi-heat particle blade past Savoir's unit's nosetip and slicing the movement cables at the abdomen. Despite taking consecutive hits, Savoir still pulls out the beam tomahawk, and the handle that's larger than the blade releases light particles to form an axe-shaped blade. However, the <<Geara Zulu>> is very slow without an arm and a leg. The two <<ReZELs>> easily dodge the beam tomahawks and continue to do hit and run tactics. The light for the saber transform into a beast's mouth as it devours the <<Geara Zulu>>, causing the battered machine to let out the conducting liquid that floats into vacuum like blood.

To any bystander, it looks like a delayed execution, but in fact, that's not the case. When near the colony, they must try not to use the rifle and trigger the reactor. The pilots of the <<ReZELs>> were just using common sense to close in on the enemy machine to stop it. This tactic is correct, and it uses the unique characteristic of the transformable mobile suit <<ReZEL>>. However, the pilots are all rookies who lack actual combat experience. As they continue to attack in the same patterns, Savoir's <<Geara Zulu>> floats towards the port, and the civilian ships that are entering and exiting the docking bay are each taking action to evacuate. However, they're still much clumsier than the agile mobile suits. Several ships collide with each other, and let out sparks as they graze each other. The scattered exterior damage the guiding lights, and even though they're all gathered, the ships that are entering and leaving in an orderly manner are in chaos, and screams and hollers can be heard from the port management authority.

Savoir hears these voices subconsciously. The all-view monitor is already more than half destroyed, and the ball-shaped cockpit is showing cracks on half the area. However, he still manages to see a transport ship colliding with a small ship. The machine's spinning, and the images continue to enter his eyes. He sees the gateway of the docking bay getting closer, and the guiding lights are moving from down to up. *I have to get away from here,* Savoir thinks. *I might get civilian ships involved if I stay here, and I might even lose the chance*

for the <<Garencieres>> to escape. If the port carries out extreme measures and close all the gateways, it'll be over. He has forgotten that the flying shrapnel stabbed into his abdomen, and blood's filling his helment. Savoir activates the thruster of the <<Geara Zulu>>, and this isn't something Savoir is doing as a person, but a pilot with morality and duty doing something instinctive.

The <<Geara Zulu>> that lost its limbs waves the tomahawk and roars. To the <<ReZEL>> pilots who haven't realized that this is already civilized spaceway, Savoir's actions just look suicidal. It's because they're rookies that they immediately use the beam rifles out of fear at that moment.

"ALL HAIL NEO ZEON!!"

Savoir's roar is covered by the Mega-particles that hit the cockpit directly. The reactor core doesn't collapse, but the <<Geara Zulu>> explodes from inside. The explosive ball of light that's expanding immediately lights up the docking bay, and the scattered shrapnel carry burning trails as they disappear into the dark space.

Part 8[edit]

The explosion seems to happen at the port as the impact reaches the gateway nearly, causing the air in the central port 1km away to vibrate slightly. It's not really a clear tremor, just a shaking of the air, a trembling that's like touching skin—

Inside one of the 4 ships floating there, at the deck of the <<Garencieres>>, Marida senses this sensation from inside the cockpit of the <<Kshatriya>>. It's the cry of a person before the life vanishes—I'm here. Listen to me, everyone. After such a cry, the shockwave that came over like a burden rocks the air, creating goosebumps in her body and heart. She grips onto the control panel, and that horrifying chill that passes through her body made her tremble. Don't get swallowed by this, Marida told herself. Don't empathize with a life that's gone. I'll show weaknesses if I do that, and I'll share the same fate one day.

On the all-view screen, she can see the workers who were preparing to leave the port suddenly stop and look around. The other crew members were also shocked by this slight tremor. (What is it? An explosion…?) Gilboa's voice came through the wireless communicator. He can feel this shockwave he can't understand, and Marida's angry over their slow-wittedness. Why are 'normal humans' so casual?

"IT'S SAVOIR! CAN'T YOU HEAR!?"

She can't help but roar out, and immediately regrets it. Gilboa's just an ordinary veteran pilot, and can't possibly hear Savoir's 'voice'. (Savoir?) Marida ignores Gilboa's surprised voice and asks, "How's the contact with the captain!?"

(It's cut. The Minovsky Particles got thicker. Activate the <<Kshatriya>>, save the captain, and get out of here.)

With any means necessary. Marida can slightly feel that Gilboa's panicking too, and asks again, "Are we going to start fighting inside the colony?"

(There're enemies outside. We can only break through from the inside of the colony. Faster!)

It's been more than ten minutes since they detected the enemy's presence, and though they started getting ready before Savoir notified them, it'll take some time before the <<Garencieres>> can leave. Besides 'her', there's also Zinnerman—her master that she can't leave behind, which means that there's a lot less things she can do. "Really…!" After grumbling, Marida lets the mechanical arm of the <<Kshatriya>> give a thumbs up to indicate to the deck personnel that she's ready to sortie.

The cargo hatch over, and the sliding cargo rack slides, pulling the <<Kshatriya>> out of the ship. The <<Kshatriya>>'s mono-eye lights up, releases itself from its restraints and bends its upper body. The wing-shaped emblem on the sleeve—the insignia of Neo Zeon is flashing. As it deploys the four large pods, the large body of the <<Kshatriya>> stands up at a corner of the dock.

While the other ship workers and port workers are all staring in disbelief, Marida puts on the helmet and pulls the visor down. The port doesn't have zero gravity, but it's rather inconvenient to move with all the air around. She has to consider the air resistance and increase the thruster burst, but if she just randomly shoots them out, she'll send the surrounding people flying. She lands on the floor of the port, letting the soles hook grab onto the rails, and then watches the workers frantically leave. She lets the <<Kshatriya>> move forward and chases away the people floating in the air until she can finally use her thrusters safely. Suddenly, she feels a sharp killing intent.

The enemy's here. Marida sees this instinct that's transformed into a flash pass by her forehead, leaving behind a tiny vestige of light in her mind. The flash causes the psycommu's power to increase, shooting out from the cockpit and activating the funnels that are hidden in the <<Kshatriya>> pods. Before Marida even realizes it, three funnel

binders fly out from the pods and start moving like they were shot out by her.

The 2m-long attack drones shoot out its boosters, and the funnel-shaped machines all fly towards the port. The front unit flies past the heads of the port workers, through partitions that are sealed up, and immediately reaches the port before firing the mega-particle beam, breaking a small hole through the thick wall that's separating this place from vacuum. As the air flow becomes stronger, the other two units fly out of the port.

The enemy that's entering the port—the Federation's main unit <<Jegan>> is showing signs of wavering as it moves through the large gateway for ships. The funnels fly out from the melted hole and shoots out its thrusters for a short while before surrounding the <<Jegan>> in three directions. Marida closes her eyes and analyzes the situation inside her heart. She can clearly sense that the <<Jegan>>'s feeling killing intent from the three small objects and intends to retreat.

"Too slow."

She opens her eyes as she said this. The beams shot from the funnels burn through the cockpit of the <<Jegan>> and pierce through the control panel. The bright green machine has a burned hole there, and the <<Jegan>> that can't move anymore floats out of the port. The funnels immediately return and fight their way through the air that's flowing out. The anti-fire system activates on detecting air flow outside, and as the large amount of rubber balls that are filled with lots of drying wall foam reach there, the last unit has already left the port. As her consciousness capture the trails of loyal hunting dogs, Marida holds her breath and grabs onto the ball-shaped control panel.

There's still a lot of enemies behind her. Since the front unit's defeated, they'll get ready to fight as they enter the colony. As she shakes off this uneasy feeling clinging on her, Marida steps on the pedal. The thrusters that are equipped on the 4 pods light up, and her body feels the acceleration as she's held down on the linear seat. She continues to blow aside workers and preservation materials, and the huge mass of the <<Kshatriya>> that's more than 74 tonnes in weight flies in the air.

The machine flies through the final gateway leading into the colony and enters it through the airtight wall covered by the 'hills'. She moves down the artificial sun pillar and heads to the airtight room on the other side. The street lights that cover the inner wall light up the air, and a starry night-like scene surrounds Marida.

These little dots are all human living habitats, looking like normal daily lights that are as weak as glass—the images she saw in the day appeared in her mind. Marida bites on lips. *Now's not the time to think about such things. The enemy's behind me.* She has to do something big to lure the enemy away from the <<Garencieres>>.

She glides through the heavy air, and the moss-green machine that's mixed in the night stops suddenly. Marida lets her body and machine feel the friction that's different from piloting in real life, and lets the <<Kshatriya>> face the pursuers.

Part 9[edit]

The deep yet long siren sound signifies the beginning. Banagher, who's alone, leaning on the handrail of the roof, hears this echo and lifts his head.

Looking down the mansion, the night scene is the same as before. The sound of the siren sounds similar to damage outside the colony, but this is too quiet. Banagher thinks. It's not rare for larger pieces to collide and damage the outer walls, but normally speaking, the streets will have emergency vehicles around to check on the inner and outer operations of the colony when the siren rings, and there's no signs of them now.

"Huh? Another meteorite?" A casual chatter can be heard beside his foot. At the balcony below, there're five, six faces that are flushed red with alcohol. "Oi, someone switch on the TV, please?" Another person spoke, someone else chokes himself and yells, "DAMN IT! THERE'S NO AIR!" Banagher frowns and looks at the group of people who treated the siren as an amusement, and is about to go down to the level below. Suddenly, a flash that appears causes him to widen his eyes.

The lights that appear like lines flashed 2, 3 times in the air, and immediately lights up the inner walls of the wide colony. 10km away, the flashes light the 'hills' facing the Earth like day, showing the dark shadows of clouds floating in the air. The loud explosion rocks the entire interior of the colony.

The loud volume and lights that covers the senses continue to ring and echo through the air. Banagher feels giddy as well as he hears a girl scream. He saw it on TV before, a flash and sound that's similar to lightning on Earth—the only difference is that the light cutting through the night sky forms a weird straight stroke. Banagher grips onto the handrail hard and stares at the colored flash in the sky. The pink light axis appears again, shining through the clouds and onto the artificial

sun pillar. He then sees an orange ring expanding.

The thunderclap-like rumbling continues, and sounds of explosions ring through the clouds, accompanying the deafening sounds of metal being ripped as the bright flames are etched into Banagher's vision. The fireball emits black smoke as it glides in the air and falls towards the inner wall. As it crashes, it creates a large mushroom cloud, and Banagher feels that the handrail on the roof is shaking.

The screams downstairs got more intense. "IT CRASHED!" "ISN'T THAT WHERE LUWAN'S HOUSE IS!?" Voices like these echoed. Some of them screamed, "IT'S A WAR! THERE'S FIGHTING OVER THERE!?" That voice make Banagher feel like he was dragged on the shoulder, but he continues to stare at the starry sky. His consciousness was attracted to an object that instantly appeared for a moment in the clouds when the flames of explosion expanded.

The thing has a sharp head and thick limbs, and from its shoulders, 4 wings extend out. He seem to see a giant in the form of a devil in those comics, rumbling in the clouds. "What is that…?" Banagher muttered. His heart is pounding hard, and the unknown impulse surges in him. At this moment, it's a bad thing when they don't know who the enemy is, and it's dangerous to be in such an obvious place. The words he never thought of before is ringing in Banagher's mind, and he uses his hand to press onto the trembling forehead. *What's wrong with me? My body and mind wants to move on their own.* He hears his body screaming, *hurry up and do something about this situation. Take action —*

"Hey, that's not a Federation's unit. Is it Zeon's?"

A familiar voice came from below Banagher's feet, and he regains his senses before looking down. Takuya, who's holding onto Haro, is pointing at the space where the giant with 4 wings is. Beside him, Micott is gripping onto the balcony handrail tightly, and her tense back profile is standing there blankly. Banagher suddenly feels a chill down his spine and again looks at the sky.

"Zeon…Neo Zeon?"

He subconsciously mutters as he turns to look at the airtight wall facing the moon. The flash that's being given off is an ominous red, lighting the roofs over on the other side of the colony. *Audrey's in the 'snail' on the other side.* Banagher suddenly thinks. She, who went to meet with the Vist Foundation alone; she, who's seemingly pursued by soldiers; she, who when asked whether she's an activist, gave a vague answer that may be even scarier—

Banagher never thought of what to do as he's being driven by impulse. He looks down and sees the entrance of the mansion. The Foundation's limo is still at where it was, but the men in suits are all outside the vehicle. They look up at the flashes that appear from time to time, speaking into the wireless communicator. Even from afar, one can see their panicked expressions, which proves that this is an accident for the Foundation as well.

Cardeas Vist's cockiness felt vexing. His expression seemed to say, *I have everything under control*, but now, there's a scenario even he couldn't predict. With this conclusion, Banagher realizes that Audrey, who's in his hands, is in danger, and an unknown impulse rocks his heart. In the midst of extreme violence that's full of flashes and noise, Banagher grabs onto the roof's handrail. The charred stench that's like soot in the air—the stench created by the beam weapons scatter all around, and this is the first time Banagher smells the stench of the battlefield.

Part 10[edit]

Even with air, the tremors can spread through a plane that they're in contact with. On the outer-most area of the <<wheel>> of Industrial 7, the people are hidden inside the <<Loto>> under what can be called underground, and Commander Daguza Mackle feels the vibration coming from the seat.

"Looks like we were attacked by enemy ambush and started fighting inside the colony."

The operator sitting at the front seat hands the scouting report over. It's just as predicted. The irregular tremors aren't triggered by things like meteorites and stuff crashing into each other. The mobile suit squad of the <<Nahel Argama>>'s being pulled off by the enemy and stretched the boundary of the battlefield into the colony. Daguza really wants to lash out at the impulsiveness of these amateurs and ask, "What's the situation?" "Not good." The operator answers without looking back,

"It's said that there's only one enemy unit, but it seems like it's equipped with psycommu. Our side already has some damage."

And there's damage to the colony as well. Daguza adds on in his heart and looks over at the driver seat's display. The two <<Lotos>> arrive at the attack point, and the fully-armed men are all waiting for the signal to begin. The original plan's to surround the colony, coordinate with the mobile suit squad, let the <<Nahel Argama>> force itself into the dock, and begin the operation. However, things end up like this. Whether

they're to continue on or stop, the squad leader Daguza has to decide when they can't contact the outside world.

From the current situation, it seems that the battle just happened unexpectedly. In that case, the Vist Foundation and the 'Sleeves' are busy protecting themselves and can't possibly prevent this secret deal from being carried out. In this case, this means that their plan to stop this deal is done. But even like that, their prime target, the <<Laplace Box>> is still dangling there. Even if they decide to evacuate, the 'Sleeves' will think of a way to get it. The Vist Foundation's movements aren't easy to predict, but they'll definitely carry out some resistance. It's very likely that they'll use this chaos of the battle to snatch the 'box' back and head into the deepest parts of the courtyard.

It's the place that's protected by ideologies and authority, and even the things that can be seen inside can become invisible. The courtyard in the deepest part of the Foundation—is a place where the army, and even the prime minister of the Federation government can't enter. That's why the 'box' is protected till now. However, what happened in the past doesn't matter. To ECOAS, the most important thing is to complete this mission and decide whether the situation allows them to do so. Most importantly, if they retreat and reorganize themselves, the 'box' will be hidden in a place they can't touch.

There's no second chance. Daguza shakes off all other concerns because of this and orders his troops emotionlessly, "Notify everyone. We're going in."

A deep red color flashes inside the machine, and the operator answers "Roger" and faces the console again. Daguza's heart isn't confused or hesitating, just thinking of how to deal with the current situation. He checks with the pilot sitting beside the operator, "Can we do it?". The <<Loto>> that's in tank mode can carry a lift for lifting goods, but the problem is after that. The pilot's masked face moves slightly and honestly answers, "This is the first time I'm doing this, but I was once trained to deal with psycommu."

"We can do it. If we use the mobility of the <<Loto>>, we can at least wear down the enemy numbers."

"Roger that. Hand me the firing control. Just focus on driving."

"Roger that." The pilot answers rather enthusiastically. Their aim is to prevent the enemy machine from getting near to the <<Magallanica>> and helping to complete the enemy's mission, but the <<Loto>>'s involvement in the battle has an effect of supporting their allies. They can't expect the <<Loto>> to fight effectively as a mobile suit when it

doesn’t have any beam weapons, which will make this mission riskier, but Daguza feels that this is worth betting their lives on. At least, it’s better to see how the battle goes without being spotted instead of hiding in a dark cave.

Of course, he knows that this is a wish he can’t say out. Parts aren’t supposed to have hopes and expectations. It’s not because of whether they’re being picky about the mission, but that they want to finish the mission they’re in charge of. It’s because of such specifics they demand of themselves as they take action that the world can continue to rotate. Daguza doesn’t have any doubts about this reasoning to himself as he looks at the multiple lights on the display.

Infiltrate near the target, take it down, snatch and destroy. That’s the trace of light that reflects each ECOAS member’s actions. Each person has their own mission, and together, forms this group called ECOAS. Daguza’s the squad leader, the part called the eye, observing the movements of the other intrinsic parts. The <<Loto>> starts to move, and with the deep rumbling sound of the track rotation, the operator continues on with a flat tone,

“Alpha, Bravo, move out. Secure targets. 1, the command block; 2, the authority block. Collect related intel on the ‘box’, confirm location and secure it. Our priority’s to secure the ‘box’. All obstacles are to be eliminated. I repeat. All obstacles are to be eliminated…”

Thanks to the relay point they set before, the wireless radio’s rather clear even with Minovsky Particles flying around. The ECOAS members move down to the outer-most area of the Wheel, waiting on standby near the linkway of the colony builder <<Magallanica>> before starting their move.

All sorts of safety mechanisms on the <<Magallanica>>, including electricity, are all self-generated. There are no circuits shared with the colony, as only the construction materials used to form them are the same as <<Industrial 7>>. However, this large gate is closed, and now, there's no way for both squads to contact each other. They set up several access points, but each of them have layers of securify, and they have Vist Foundation's guards watching. Every single one of them are armed with weapons, and have a history of being either part of the police or the army. They're more like a private army of the Foundation than guards.

However, there are still openings. In the colony’s construction management, a part of the <<Wheel>> has to involve the <<Magallanica>>, so both paths are linked. Of course, they can’t get

through the satellite, and the safety procedures of the circuits prevent both server and chemical attacks. They don't know if the maintenance passages exist or not, so the inspections are carried out by remote controls, which is very thoroughly. However, it's not like nobody's interfering. With the heat release considered, there's a separation between the pipes. ECOAS, which is divided into Alpha and Beta climb up from the floor of the <<Wheel>> and proceed in different tunnels. Both squads then choose a 'doorkin' to sneak into the duct that's giving off hot air.

The cabled passage is only 70cm wide, and there's a distance of more than 200m from here to the <<Magallanica>>. In this narrow passage where it's hard to move freely, the 'doorkin' plug out the gathered cables to remove the alarm in the passage as he continues to move in. About 30 minutes later, he reaches the standby location. He uses a small blowtorch to open holes in the wall that are just big enough for the small cameras that are the size of cables. The cameras that can be controlled remotely move around like snakes as the tip with the lens slip out from the gaps in the floor.

At a passage with a duct, there's a guard there. He's not wearing a spacesuit, but the suit is bulging unnaturally underneath, and one can tell that he has a shoulder-arms weapon underneath. The lens rotates, checking the positions of the cameras in the ceiling of the passage, and the 'doorkin' enter a standby phase. Based on the situation, he can sometimes wait for up to a day without eating or sleeping, but this time, they only waited for 15 minutes. Once they hear the action command in the wireless radio, the 'doorkins' open the hatch of the duct, and the floor above bounced.

The alarm rings as the hatch opens, and it's too late when the people in the security center realized that there's something wrong. The floor that's floating under zero gravity hits the ceiling, and before any sound is even made, the 'doorkin' has already moved behind the guard's back, covering the mouth with his left hands and using knife to stab into the guard's back. The blade is stabbed in between the ribs, and with a little twist, the air flows into the lungs. The guard's raised hand is limp, and dies without being able to let out any sound. The 'doorkin' tosses the limp corpse aside and starts his actual mission.

He removes the tunnel lock and opens the door leading to the airlock. The way to the entrance is opened, and the main force that's waiting in the <<Wheel>> start to move. The dark grey normal suits leap off the floor of the <<Wheel>>, using portable thrusters to get through the passage in an instant. After passing through the airlock of the <<Magallanica>>, they abandon the heavy thrusters and use the

mobile handles on the wall to move forward. The ‘doorkin’ receives the recoilless carbine rifle from the last person who enters and follows them.

They use their masks to hide their faces under the helmet, and the group carry their recoilless carbine rifles and silently move through the zero-gravity passage. They destroy the cameras on the way and reach a junction. The squad leader standing at the side indicates that everyone is to scatter. The members kick the wall down in a skilled manner and raise their carbines before squeezing down the trigger of the cable gun attached at the bottom of the rifle to fire the steel cable. The steel cables that are shot out start to spiral, and the members quickly turn to where they’re heading to. They send one person as the forward and one person to watch the back. Even with guards appearing, they continues to let the cable gun fire at the same speed, firing their carbines once the guards appear in their way, and shooting out 5mm bullets that shattered the guards chest.

The contact with the guards is being cut off one by one, and the visual images of many cameras are being cut. Both entrances are being invaded at the same time, causing the security center of the <<Magallanica>> to panic. The intruders, 16 men altogether in squads of 8 will scatter whenever they reach a junction, and enter the central block like poison. The center personnel activate the alarm, trying to close the partitions of the tunnels, but it’s too late for this countermeasure to be used. The intruders have already found the security circuits and used their guns to wreck most of the wires. The people with army expression don’t think that they’re the guerillas from the ‘Sleeves’.

“Manhunters. THE INTRUDERS ARE MANHUNTERS! EVERYONE, TAKE NOTE—”

The voice of the central block personnel that came from the wireless address is cut. The guards that are armed with automatic handguns are gliding by, and feel scared on hearing that unnatural cut. However, they haven’t made the mistake of revealing their positions by shouting. The enemies are the manhunters, the special forces that even the Federation army is terrified of. A guard who once trained with them when he was serving the army warns his comrades. *Stick together. We must move out together as a team. No matter what the manhunters are planning, the command block will definitely be the target. Once we seal off the partitions and take them out one at a time, we’ll have a chance.* However, the guards that intend to shout this into the radio are just a normal army to the ECOAS members.

A guard who's moving with 3 comrades finds that there are signs of intruders at a junction. He uses his hand signals to communicate with his comrades, and intend to pincer the intruder from both front and back. His comrades head off to the front, while he heads in the corner to trail the enemy. The enemy hasn't realized this yet. They should be wearing bulletproof vests, but they can't possibly move with ten handgun rounds slammed into them. The guard raises his recoilless rifle and waits for his comrades to contact him through radio, but from the corner of his eye, he sees that something's sliding here on the mobile handle from the wall on the other side.

It's a Flashbang. As the guard sees that item that's the size of a lighter arrive, it explodes in front of his eyes, and 2.5 million Candela of light appeared. A loud noise rings in his ears, causing his muscles to numb for the moment. The guard loses his sight and mobility, and he, together with his allies, are like fried fish floating up when they're cooked. The members of ECOAS point their guns at the guards on the premise of eliminating obstacles, and the muzzles with caps shoot out bullets. The guard is shot through the chest and sent spinning a round before slamming into the wall. Other gunshots can be heard from all around, and during the explosions, noise can be heard throughout. If the <<Magallanica>> can be described as a snail, then ECOAS started its invasion from near the center, and has immediately expanded its territory, getting the outer shell involved as they head down the main body—the central block where the command console and other important facilities are at. They need the data in the central block and technicians to control them. The others are to be treated as people with potential to be obstacles. The people who enter the members' sight will be shot whether they have weapons or not, and there's a lot of hot blank magazines and floating blood on the passages.

The command console block is about to be taken, and there are investigators who're entering the residential area inside the wall. Two members land on the residential area that are covered with grass. They're loaded with nightvision equipment that can be put on the helmets, and the heavy equipped normal suits are running through the quiet prairie. The surrounding air's full of killing intent, but the steady appearance of the Vist's residence is still lying in darkness.

Part 11[edit]

Audrey's habit when she detects danger is to immediately turn off the lights in the room. Through the weak light that's coming through the window from outside, she moves towards the bed.

She checks that there's enough space under the bed to crawl into, and

bends down as she holds her breath. The occasional tremors continue. And it's not hard to imagine that something happened to <<Industrial 7>>, probably a war. But now, she has to pay attention to the gunshots and explosions. The clear but soft explosion sounds can be heard, unlike the rumbling sounds that's been going on till now. It's not from the outside, but the sound of air colliding with each other in this colony builder.

Ever since the first gunshot rang, the atmosphere's in the house has been pretty noisy. There's a lot more tension and killing intent that fills the air this time as compared to the rumbling of the colony. Is it Zinnerman's actions? Audrey grabs onto the bedsheet tightly. Impossible. If that's the case, she will be taken as a hostage and moved away from here. And if there's no signs of this, that means—

She doesn't know. That's right, the scariest moment is when she doesn't know what happens. Audrey remembers her childhood. At the deepest part of the large battleship, she will listen to her regent and sit on the throne. Once the battle started, the ship started to rattle, and the adults would definitely say: It'll soon be over. Please relax, princess. That's not true. I want to know exactly what's going on. If I knew, I will be able to respond in turn no matter how young I am, but the adults just don't want to scare this kid.

*Ever since I was born, I'm always called princess and treated as one; that's why I'm often out of touch with reality. Even Zinnerman…*as she continues to think, the shrill breaking sound rings beside Audrey, and she instinctively hides under the bed.

Gunshots, ringing in the house, sounds of glass shattering, sounds of objects collapsing downstairs; Audrey hugs her head and curls her body, holding her breath. The gunshot rings again, and this time, it rang outside the door. After that, she hears something heavy land with a thud. After a while, footsteps and presences can be detected outside the wall, and a shadow appears through the light shining into the gap between the door and the wall.

The door creaks open, and Audrey forces her stiff body to lean towards the inside of the bed. It's not Zinnerman and the rest. The presence outside the door feels really rigid and even less reliable. Maybe the door will be broken down the next moment, and the bed will be riddled with bullets. Audrey tries her best to open her closed eyes and notice everything around her. This continues for another 10 seconds, and the sound coming from the door handle stops as the shadow on the floor disappears.

The footsteps move further away. It seem that the person heard some

radio signal. Audrey's sweaty hand lets go of the velvet on the floor. She cautiously climbs out from under the bed, fidgeting towards the door. She looks through the old-styled keyhole, and there's no one on the corridor.

The corridor's lit by the soft decorative lights on the wall and the hard lamp lights above, and there's a whiff of white smoke that smells like smoke. Besides the stinging head, there's a unique bloody smell. Audrey makes up her mind, takes a deep breath, and opens the door slightly. The first thing she sees is a pool of blood that flowed to the entrance.

She follows the blood trail, and can see a man in suit sprawled over there with his handgun on the floor. Audrey can tell from his splattered head that this is caused by a rifle. She endures the nauseating feeling and leaves the room, covering her nose with her hand as she watches the man with slightly purple brain juices splattered on the floor. From the suit and the physique, she knows that he's someone of the Foundation, and she saw a few times before.

Let alone a handgun, it's not easy to bring in a rifle when it's so big. It's definitely not Zinnerman's group who did this. Audrey tries her best to steady her trembling knees. There's another organization taking action; they planned to carry out their attack and ambushed this <<Magallanica>>. Most likely, they sensed that the 'Sleeves' have made contact with the Vist Foundation, and came to stop the transfer of the <<Laplace Box>>—in that case, it's easy to guess who the attackers are.

Is the battle inside the colony their diversion? Audrey thought halfway through before stopping and leans herself on the corridor wall, beside the body. No matter what the attackers aim to do, it seem that they don't know that she's here. She has to use this time to get out from this house and meet with Zinnerman and the rest. Since things ended up like this, Zinnerman will give up getting the 'box'. She has to stop them from losing their chance to escape just because they're looking for her, and end up stirring the battle, which will be a mistake on their priorities.

I have to be faster. This anxiety awakens that strength inside her to step outside. Audrey holds her breath and walks down the stairs, quickly walking through corridors that may still have attackers. She goes through the room which only has the tapestry, leaves the atrium in front of the entrance, and sees the outside of the house in front of her, the dark forest.

Part 12[edit]

“Game is up. Hand ‘her’ over to me.”

Zinnerman points the wireless speaker over at him, and his subordinates do the same, holding down Gael and company who reached their hands into their coats. Is it a bluff, or are there really bullets inside the speakers? Before he can even think, Zinnerman’s hand let out a flash and an explosive sound, and sparks fly beside Cardeas’ feet.

Zinnerman then points the speaker at Gael, not letting him get the chance to move forward. Both of them are staring at each other, and Cardeas senses that the other party’s serious, whispering, “Calm down, captain!”

“I intend to do that right from the beginning. Even if I plan to set you up, I won’t use such a stupid plan.”

“Your words and actions already proves this. You never said that ‘she’s in your hands, and this happened.”

Another rumbling occurs as he finished, and the explosion rang. A lot of dust land behind Zinnerman. Cardeas can tell that there isn’t just a a battle inside the colony, and that someone’s trying to barge into this <<Magallanica>> to take control. The phone that was ringing until now is suddenly interrupted, so the intruders must have cut off the line.

There’s no need to suppress the entire <<Magallanica>>, which means that the army—the ‘higher-ups’—intend to use this chance to get the <<Laplace Box>>. They’re just eliminating the ‘Sleeves’ out of convenience, and their top priority is to secure the ‘box’. He can imagine the higher ups giving an order like ‘Eliminate any obstacles, even if it’s the leader of the Foundation. If anything happens, the successor to the Foundation is amongst the higher ups’…

Zinnerman should have realized that this attack wasn’t just targeted at them, but his thinking is hindered by the fact that ‘she’ is in the Foundation’s hands. Cardeas watches him as he’s unable to distinguish between deliberation and coincidence as his expression is just showing that he’s intent on getting her ‘back’. He admits, “That’s true.” and quickly scans around everywhere, remembering where the tables and chairs are.

“I’m thinking the same way. What are you going to do? If you shoot here, everyone will die, and we can’t save ‘her’.”

Zinnermans’ eyelids tremble as his expression drifts. The tense killing intent is wavering, and Cardeas watches his expression show a somewhat comprehensive look like before as he raises the back of the

chair nearby.

Due to the low gravity, the chair floats up higher than expected. At this close distance, it's still not a strange thing to fire, but Cardeas believes that Zinnerman won't fire that easily. A louder explosion rings, and everyone's attention is diverted. Cardeas then throws the chair at Zinnerman and immediately gets down on the ground without waiting for the chair to create a sound.

Numerous gunshots ring above Cardeas' head, and Gael's large body presses down on him. Two gunshots can then be heard beside his ears. He lets out a slight moan and hears people being slammed on the wall. Cardeas' pulled up from the floor by someone, and is about to be brought out of the room when there's a louder cracking sound than a gunshot. The white smoke fills the reception room. Numerous gunshots can be heard through the smoke, and he feels that there's a lot of heat beside his ears, and his right shoulder got hit with a huge impact.

It feels like he's hit by a hot rod. Cardeas feels faint, and Gael catches him before his hand touches the ground. Gael continues to shoot back as he drags Cardeas to the lift. Cardeas watches his escort get shot, and blood scatters in the white smoke.

On the other side of the smoke, it seems that Zinnerman's large profile has gotten away. Before they can recap on what happened in this worst outcome, the smoke from the smoke grenade rolls onto the corridor, covering him. Cardeas and Gael enter the lift, and rise from the living block to the central block.

The smoke that seeps in irritates the eyes, and for every cough made, the shoulder will hurt. It's a graze, but a hot gunshot wound that's like a slash will hurt a lot. "Your wound…" Gael approaches, and Cardeas interrupts, "I'm fine. You?" as he picks up the intercom phone at the control desk.

Even though they knew that it's dead, they're still trying their luck. Amazingly, the phone links to the command console miraculously. "Chairman! Thank goodness you're alright!" Cardeas asks back, "What's the situation?"

"We're invaded by land forces. Looks like it may be the special forces of the Federation."

Cardeas feels some chill, and he exchanges looks with Gael. This is the truly scary part of the Federation when they're serious; using special forces as thieves in a hit and run operation—'Hurry up and

delete all classified information regarding the <<Box>>." Cardeas says,

"Scrap the data for the <<UC Plan>>. Let all the Anaheim workers escape in the capsules. You too, hurry up and leave. The enemies are professionals, so try and avoid a meaningless battle…"

Thud, the phone's suddenly cut. Cardeas put down the phone at looks over at Gael.

"I'm going to the command console. How's the situation with the radio?"

"We can't use it normally. The Minovsky Particles are too much…"

Gael's bloodied large body is bent down, using his handkerchief to press onto Cardeas' wound. Since they can't use radio, they can't rely on their surviving subordinates. Having realized that only he and Gael are the only ones who can complete this job in this worst case scenario, Cardeas says, "I'll go alone to the command console. You're to go over to the <<Unicorn>>."

He's worried about 'her', but he can only believe that Zinnerman and the rest will save her. Cardeas stretches his arm out at Gael "But, chairman, you alone…" He's not agreeing with this verbally, but Gael hands over to small handgun in his ankle holster.

"Sorry…I got betrayed by my relative, and things ended up like this."

He endures the pain on the shoulder and slides the sleeve open, putting the first bullet into the chamber. "Madam Martha?" Cardeas doesn't answer Gael's question as he puts the small handgun into his pocket.

"The 100-year alliance is so weak…we're the ones who broke it first, but they intend to use this chance to snatch everything away. I'll leave the <<Unicorn>> to you. If it's about to be taken away, destroy it."

He has a premonition that this may be the last time they're meeting each other. After taking a slight breath, Cardeas sees that Gael's straight expression is talking to him wordlessly, and says for the final time.

"We must not let that fall into the Federation's hands…!"

Part 13[edit]

It's still a visible battlefield, but the range is rather long when fighting in space. As both sides are moving at several kilometres per second, a little criss-cross will send them going about 100, 200m away. Thus, the

pilots use a matter radar that works within 20km to catch sight of the enemy, get close such that the optical sensors—the mobile suits' 'eyes' can be seen, and then attack when they're getting past each other. They do use beam sabers to slice at each other at zero distance, and they'll shoot at each other from 10km away as they will then get into the enemy's blind spots.

Thus, to mobile suit, this 'cylinder' colony is way too cramped to fight in. They have to fight with a range of what's basically a ground battle, use the AMBAC system to fight in mid-air, which is a basic must, and also, they have to handle this unexpected air resistance that is really annoying. Air's continuing to flow in here as there are artificial currents used for heating near the artificial sun at the center axis, and at the inner wall, there's air flow caused by the Coriolis' Effect as the colony spins, causing the winds to interfere with each other and blow.

The mobiles suits of the Nahel Argama enter <<Industrial 7>>, and before they can get used to this environment, they're caught under enemy bombardment. The first one to lose his life is the 3rd <<Jegan>> unit. The machine becomes a fireball and is pulled by inertia, ending up crashing into the inner wall of the colony and smashed to smithereens. Black smoke flies up from the crash point and is being dragged by the Coriolis Effect, forming a black ring in the spinning inner wall of the colony. They're unable to scatter inside the narrow space colony, and the pilots of <<ReZEL>> no. 5 and 7 can only cover each other with their backs facing each other as they look around.

They know where the enemy mobile suit is, but what's scary are the automatic cannons near the clouds—the <<Funnels>>. They're so small that they can't be detected easily, and may even slide into their blind spots. The advancement of the psycommu causes the distance control of the <<Funnels>> to be easier, and the movements of the enemy are rather otherworldly too as they haven't gotten a single hit. This isn't something that an ordinary pilot can do.

"Is that guy a Newtype...?"

The pilot of unit no. 5 whispered, and the pilot of unit no. 7 retorts back through the radio that's full of static, "Don't spout nonsense!" A Newtype can detect the enemy's 'presence' through the armor of a mobile suit, predict their moves and attack; and to the pilots, that's synonymous with 'monster'.

In fact, the <<Kshatriya>> is fast, and dodged the moment its enemies were about to fire. However, it's not an easy battle for Marida at all. The air causes the machine to become heavy, and the movements of

the <<Funnels>> becomes slow. She has to consider the safety of the colony and use the <<Funnels>> to surround the enemies and take them down, but the blowing wind is causing trouble for her.

However, she can't just shoot to restrain. The power of the mega-particles may shoot through the outer wall of the colony if it's shot recklessly. If she doesn't shoot at the best moment, the enemy units may also crash into the inner wall of the colony. She has to predict the enemy's movements and let them crash into the airtight walls or the construction place without anyone around. She doesn't want to let an enemy machine land in the middle of the colony as it is now.

"All because I saw the colony a little bit…!"

The laughing children and the young mother pushing the baby pram appears in front of her eyes. Marida shoots the thrusters and continues to flip consecutively as she closes in on the firing lines of the Vulcan guns. She uses the pillar of artificial sun as a shield, lets out three new <<Funnels>> and use the mechanical arms in the pods to take back the <<Funnels>> that have run out of battery. There's a mechanical

arm for each of the four pods, called hidden hands. The main unit itself has a small beam saber and three simple fingers, and the <<Kshatriya>> takes the <<Funnels>> back like a monstrous windmill. The fire of the Vulcan gun lights its moss green surface, and there's a grazing sound between the machine and the wide air; the 20m tall monster is flying in the night sky of <<Industrial 7>>.

The fires that are flashing within 3km in the sky look just like sparks from a fairy's wand. Even when one can hear the sound of the thrusters and Vulcan cannons that sound like a noisy machine is being started, most of the residents still don't know what happens. The Port Management gave an alert, but not many people at the Autonomy Bureau even knew of why this order was given, and the emergency broadcast on the television only shows the residents evacuating. The police and the firefighters who came out to check on the situation can only look up at the sky with the residents.

Even if it's like this, the firefighters and patrol cars are moving down the roads after seeing the residential area burn. Some residents are already taking action on their own. Most of them are people who experienced war, and from the stench of ozone in the air that came with the wind, they start to evacuate without waiting for the Autonomy Bureau to advise them. Families of all sizes are carrying emergency backpacks or filling their electric cars with their valuables, and the roads leading to the air-raid shelters are slowly packed out. The Autonomy Bureau never changes the evacuation plans, and the police's coordination is too slow, making these reasons why the chaos got escalated. Honks and roars continue to echo, and <<Industrial 7>> is gradually sinking into panic.

The oxygen masks that are on the roadside are activated, and calls can be heard. "EVERYONE GET ONE EACH!" "MAKE SURE YOUR CHILDREN HAVE ONE, ALL RIGHT!?" The electric cars that are stuck move towards the opposite lanes out of impatience, and accelerate off while ignoring the police. There are air-raid shelters for emergency refuge all over the place, and people can reach them without taking electric cars. However, they are aiming for the underground space below the colony. 150m deep into the outer walls, there are passages for emergency use leading to capsules for escape.

"Even if we evacuate to the air-raid shelters, we're dead if the colony's wrecked. Better get on the capsules."

Those drivers with experiences of disaster drive off to the construction area. The elevators down into the underground are managed by the colony's management, and they are not to be opened without the

Autonomy Bureau's permission. However, there's a chance if it's the construction area where works are under way. The elevator's not locked and still activated. Once the information came from the workers, the rows of electric cars cross the barricade and enter the colony. However, there's a large congestion of cars when they arrive at the cargo lift entrance.

This isn't because the hatch is closed, but that they feel that the elevator's moving up. The door's suddenly rammed open from the inside, and a large tank comes out. This one unit takes up the space of 6 cars as it moves up the elevator. The brown armored vehicle that rises to landscape of the inner wall seem to hesitate on seeing the large number of electric cars blocking their way, but it immediately starts to move forward.

The men who were trying to open the metal door frantically create a path. The tank that's 10m long and 6m wide at most rushes into the electric cars. The caterpillar wheels are about to crush the electric cars in front of them when the tank suddenly activates its thrusters and flies its vehicle body over the drivers' head.

Its shape transforms, and both ‘feet’ land in the gaps between the cars. The surrounding electric cars are sent flying because of the impact. The upright tank again lets out its thrusters, ignoring the shocked residents. It transforms into the mobile suit <<Loto>> and gets past the cars as if it were jumping over stones, breaking the barricade and leaving the construction area. Daguza watches the disorderly evacuation in a disappointed manner, but he immediately pulls down the captain's periscope and uses the green night vision monitor to look for enemies.

The enemy mobile suit on the monitor that is flailing its 4 wings easily dodges the 60mm Vulcan cannons from the two <<ReZELs>>. Daguza activates the automatic tracker set and calls for the driver to move forward. If possible, he doesn’t want to leave this construction area that has very few people, but a necessary landscape is required to use anti-psycommu weapons. The <<Loto>>’s large body tramples the road of the complicated commercial district, and the jet exhaust of the thrusters shatter the shops’ glass. The <<Loto>> leaps towards the office area.

A 3rd <<ReZEL>> flies out from the cargo transport entrance in the ‘hill’, and fires of Vulcan guns can be seen blazing in the air. they can’t use powerful beam rifles in the colony, and can only take down the enemy’s cockpit with a beam saber. However, the 4 wings cause them to be unable to do anything. The 3 <<ReZELs>> can only be played around with. Suddenly, a beam comes in from a completely different direction, cutting through the night sky and lighting the artificial sun pillar that’s in darkness. The <<ReZEL>> that got hit has its leg broken the explosion rocks the <<Loto>>. There’s static on the night vision, but Daguza notices that the movements of the 4 wings are a little slow. There’s an opening when it’s going to take back the battery-depleted <<Funnels>>—Daguza presses the firing mechanism on the periscope’s grip.

The 25mm cannon that is equipped on the right shoulder of the <<Loto>> releases sparks, and fires out a tracer round out of every five shots. The green light glides through the sky. Physical bullets that are shot on Earth will create an arc down due to the pull of gravity, but the colony’s Coriolis’ effect cause the fire to spin in the opposite direction. Of course, the firearms control system of the <<Loto>> reloads it. The fire flies towards the enemy unit at a very high curve, but the 4 wings immediately dodged the fire. It was set at automatic lock-on, yet the machine dodges it with a beautiful somersault.

It’s like that machine detected our ‘killing intent’. Daguza gasps and yells at the pilot, “IT’S COMING FOR US! MOVE!” He wasn’t hoping

that the cannon will take the enemy down at all, just focused on watching their own unit. Daguza leaves the driver seat of the <<Loto>> before it changes back into a tank and moves, and opens the hatch leading to the outside.

The wind pressure that strikes surrounds him. Daguza glances aside and sees the buildings gathered in the office area on both sides, and moves up onto the <<Loto>>. He gets onto the cannon which is still smoking with heat, and moves over to the hidden head. He uses the hook that's fastened on the steel ring to steady his body, and raises a rocket launcher with both hands.

He puts his face near the conductance bar and watches the aiming scope. Small jet of lights appear in the sky, and the lights that he see in the night screen are becoming bigger. 1, 2…there are 3 <<Funnels>>. Daguza fires the activation switch of the launcher and removes the restrain on the warhead.

The tank-mode <<Loto>> knocks aside the electric cars that are parked on the road shoulders and runs on the road at a top speed of 150km per hour. The <<Funnels>> continue to chase with a speed no less than 300km per hour even with the Coriolis' effect. The enemy probably won't shoot from the sky to avoid damage to the colony, and will try to get close, surround and shoot at one point. Daguza puts his finger on the trigger of the rocket launcher and waits for the chance. The <<Loto>> reaches a cross junction, and the vehicle turns 90 degrees.

A <<Funnel>> that got away from the Coriolis effect and are flying 10m away from the ground suddenly stopped. *Now!* As they appear from the corner of that large building in front, Daguza squeezes the trigger, and the launcher fires a 'net' 10m wide with tremendous backfire. It expands in mid-air, and a <<Funnel>> lands inside the steel wires as it's restrained.

If it's not touching the wall, the centrifuge force won't work no matter how low it's flying. The <<Funnel>> under zero gravity won't slow down or fall, but the net that caught it affects its trajectory and causes it to crash into a building. Once it touches the building under 1G worth of gravity, the object itself will be captured by the 1G gravity. The <<Funnel>> that touches the building shatters the glass, slams through the wall, and slides down on the tarmac surface for several meters before crashing into the phone booth and stopping.

The <<Funnel>>-type automatic cannon is captured by gravity and doesn't have the capability to fly. Daguza reloads and waits for the next chance to fire. It's not a flashy plan, but it's effective. Once he

uses this plan to eliminate the <<Funnels>>, his allies can take down the enemy that doesn't have it's trump weapon. Daguza is very delighted that the anti-psycommu tactic works. He feels a resounding sense of a real battle, and that's something he can't get for being unable to see actual combat. He's enjoying the bitter taste of adrenaline.

Perhaps this excitement causes his vision to narrow. The next moment the <<Loto>> reaches the next corner, Daguza fires the second shot. The second net that opens takes down another one, but there are people on the road. The crowds of people heading from the offices to the air-raid shelters are walking down the streets in lines.

The <<Funnel>>'s 2m long, but the weight of it isn't something that can be compared an oil barrel filled with crude oil. The <<Funnel>> that crashes into the ground crushes the electric car on the shoulder, crashes past the barricade and lands on the path. Daguza looks at that twisted piece of metal crush and what seemed like an office lady under it; he's already involved several people in this. He hears the crashing sound and the screams, and hesitates as he's about to reload a third time.

This is a fatal error that must not be made in a real battle. The <<Funnel>> slides into the blind spot and aims the cannon at the <<Loto>>. Daguza is too late in detecting the mega-particle light.

The beam pierces through the back of the <<Loto>>, evaporating the control zone and cutting through to the front. The <<Loto>> explodes and blows apart the armor on top. Daguza's sent flying into the air and crashes into the building's wall with the debris. His cervical spine isn't snapped thanks to the specially made normal suit and his own luck. Daguza passes out, and the <<Loto>> that's engulfed in fire explodes.

This explosion that rocks that office area is a lot better than the second time the attack comes at the residential area. The <<ReZEL>> no. 7 that has its leg torn off by a cannon hit from a <<Funnel>> crashes into the school compound of Anaheim Electronics Industrial College. The body itself is a mobile suit 25.8 tonnes heavy, and crashes into the wall in a spiral at a speed of 167m per second. There's no explosion, but the school compound is completely crushed. The <<ReZEL>>'s buried in the rubble. The pilot is protected by the safety airbags and saved from a concussion, and in his groggy vision, glares at the enemy suit.

"Damned Zeon monster…"

As he shakes aside the rubble, the beam rifle in the <<ReZEL>>'s hand shoots out the mega-particle cannons. The pink beam axis

crosses through the colony and hits the site preparation area that's in the way. Marida manages to dodge it and the last side, and feels a chill from the 'presence' of the pilot that comes over faster than the beam.

It's not just an enemy's intent, but also hatred. The thick killing intent is released from the beam shot of the beam rifle, causing the skin underneath the normal suit to have goosebumps. Marida sees the site preparatory block that's hit directly by the beam and exploded from the inside, and the floor of the large steel structure is covered in flames. Her control movement of the <<Kshatriya>> starts to slow down. If she moves wildly, the enemy's trajectory will change, causing the inner wall in the trajectory to be wrecked by the beam rifle. She can't expect the pilot that's overwhelmed by hatred to control his sanity and shoot patiently, and she has to keep him silent. This anxiety causes the psycommu installation's effect to increase, and the <<Funnels>> that are activated rush towards <<ReZEL>> no. 7.

Unit 7 is still shooting the beam rifle wildly. The three <<Funnels>> rush there, cutting through the air and closing in on the enemy. At this moment, <<ReZEL>> no. 1 rushes over, causing Marida to have to focus on controlling the <<Kshatriya>> again. She feels that the <<Funnels>> are becoming less reactive and are disturbed by the Coriolis' effect. That resistance inside her is pressing on her senses, and her mind's being dragged aside.

"Too strong…!"

As she subconsciously moans, the enemy swings its beam saber over as the Vulcan gun's fire closes in. The beam that's shot from the inner wall grazes the <<Kshatriya>>'s armor. Marida's being agitated by the pressure of three strong antagonistic intent, and now focuses her attacks all over, causing the <<Funnels>> to open fire.

The 3 <<Funnels>> that sweep past the ground shoot out their mega-particle cannons. One shot hits the cockpit in the centre abdomen, one shot hits the mechanical arm with the beam rifle, and <<ReZEL>> no. 7 is down. However, the last hit pierces through the thruster pack from the side, hitting the small reactor core hidden inside.

A nuclear reaction happens inside, and the reactor that provides energy is crushed—a power of a nuclear bomb expands out to the surroundings. The radiation is kept inside the core and the <<I-field>>, which prevents it from leaking, but with the explosion, the heat waves released ignites all the combustibles, and a supersonic wave becomes a storm that sweeps the interior of the colony. <<ReZEL>> no. 7 becomes a really hot fireball, lighting the night sky of <<Industrial 7>> like a miniature sun.

The concrete parts that are scattered all around the machine are instantly evaporated. The school that's hit by the impact is crushed and collapsed. The unit itself landed in the school, so most of the heat waves are covered by the Anaheim Electronics compound, but the direct hit causes the houses within a radius of 500m to be wrecked, blowing away the residents that are evacuating. The inner wall itself is also caught in the collapse. The area of the explosion start to blister due to the extreme heat, the heat waves and the impact move through the layers of the colony, reaching the outer wall 50m below, breaking the common linkway, exploding the energy block with the water tank for water vapour explosion, and finally rupturing through the outer wall and entering space. A corner of the <<Industrial 7>> cylinder is caught in a light of explosion.

A flash is released from the residential area, and a large cabbage cloud appears there. The smoke that's like a cauliflower immediately shrinks back. This isn't because of air flow, but that a corner of the inner wall has a hole, and the air's starting to flow out. Marida evades the enemies that are distracted by the explosion and sees that scene. At the center of the residential area, there's a round black burnt mark about 1km wide in diameter, and there's still a burning light on the charred surface. The flames quickly disappear with the strong winds, and a large amount of smoke, rubble and human-shaped charred remains are sucked into the round hole. The vastly decreasing pressure creates mist, and it's hard to tell what's the situation with the hole, but that hole is definitely not just 100m wide in diameter. The hole that's opened is way too big, and the armor repair parts on the machine definitely can't fill it as the rumbling white mist is gradually expanding—

"Damn it…"

I actually hit the reactor directly. Marida bites her lips hard. The many 'voices' that are wrecked by the fires and sucked out into the vacuum echo in the colony, causing the <<Industrial 7>> air that's normally being sucked in by this thin membrane to roar. The lips that are bitten let out blood that form small blobs of blood that float in front of Marida's eyes.

Part 14[edit]

White smoke is rumbling, and a huge explosion happens several shrapnel away from here. The smoke that rises with the explosion expands its range, and this smoke is sucked into the exploded hole at the same time. This hole looks like it's gathering mist, and the poison gas that's like a phantom floats over.

“THERE’S A HOLE IN THE COLONY!’ Someone yelled. Banagher, who ran down the emergency staircase alone, sees that scene as he steps out of the entrance. The colony has a hole, and the air around the hole is gradually sucked in. The condensed steam forms mist, and the explosion from before caused the inner wall to collapse and open a hole. This wasn’t just shouted randomly.

“ARE WE REALLY AT WAR HERE!?”

“WHERE’RE THE OXYGEN MASKS!? HURRY UP AND GET TO THE AIR-RAID SHELTER!”

The residents of the mansion who are also running out of the house all shout as they scamper away. The mindless lights on the streets light the anxious expressions of their faces. “Don’t panic! Everyone, calm down! Each air-raid shelter is enough to fit everyone inside!” Some police officers’ growls are mixed in, but there aren’t any signs of systematic evacuation. The explosions in the air above continue to ring at times, and the phone booths are showing signs of overcrowding. Banagher heads down the buildings on the side of the street and look down at the site of the explosion far away. The area there has tilted with the inner wall, and the slanted side that’s like a hill that’s bloated doesn’t have any electrical power, only a slightly black land. The burns that are like cigarette ash are scattered, and there is mist swaying around the circle. What should be there—the school compound of Anaheim electronics is all gone. There’s only a pile of black ash covering its building, and there’s no signs of rubble or fire that can be seen at all.

Is it because it sublimed with the explosion, or did it get sucked outside? On hearing this sound that’s filled with intense breathing, and one that doesn’t sound like himself, Banagher grips his trembling hands. *Are there students in the campus—it’s the weekend today, so I believe there shouldn’t be anyone else left in school. If that’s not the case…*

His shoulder is knocked by an impact, causing his distracted attention to return. Banagher ignores the person he knocked into and only cares about looking around. There’s something more important he has to do instead of checking the damages of the college. He immediately finds what he wants, and instinctively shouts out, “THE LIMO OVER THERE, WAIT!”

The men who are about to close the limo door are shocked and look around. Banagher kicks the ground and dashes over to that black limo. He passes through the crowd and uses his hand to grab onto the car window that’s about to close. The man sitting in the driver’s seat

widens his eyes, and the man sitting in the assistant seat gasps slightly.

“Let me get on too.”

Banagher pokes his head into the window of the assistant seat as he says this. These two, who are either guards of the Vist Foundation or watching over him, stare at his face for a few moments and blink a few times in shock. In this situation, they won’t care about some surveillance or guards. Banagher knows that they want to go back to the <<Snail>>. The young man sitting in the driver’s seat gives a completely different expression and growls back softly, “Don’t kid around. Why must we…” But Banagher doesn’t let him finish.

“Isn’t it your job to protect me?”

The man in the driver seat looks like he’s at a loss of words as he shuts his mouth. There’s no other way to get to the <<Snail>> beside going with these two people. Banagher knows that this is reckless, but he has no other idea of how to get there. *I have to do this.* This impulse continues to echo inside his heart. Banagher grabs tightly onto the door handle on the side to prevent the men from realizing that he’s trembling, and looks at the elderly man in the assistant seat. That man narrows his eyes with hard-to-determine expression, looks over behind Banagher, and points over with his chin, “Those guys too?”

Banagher looks back, and is completely speechless. Takuya and Micott are standing over there, and there’s a group of 7 to 8 people behind them, all who have appeared in the party. These people all look at Banagher with pale expressions. Micott says before Banagher can even react, “If you’re going to get to safety, bring us along too.” And steps forward, forcing Banagher to lean onto the limo.

“Why…why aren’t you going to the air-raid shelter at the mansion?”

“We don’t know which idiot went crazy and locked it from inside.” Takuya carries Haro and arrives before Micott interrupting, “The people living nearby all went home, but we can’t go back in this situation. Everyone’s locked out. There’s no place to go to either.”

“We don’t know if we can get to the air-raid shelters in other places, and there’s a hole at the school, so we can’t go near there…if we can get into the <<Snail>>…”

As she says that, Micott glances at the assistant seat of the limo. *How did it end up like this?* Banagher, who never intended to evacuate,

watches the anxious looks on these people's faces, and instinctively feels that it's dangerous to go there. There's nothing to explain this feeling, and he looks over at the sky above where the fighting's still continuing.

In the layers of clouds where it's impossible to tell whether these are clouds of smokes of explosions, the thruster jet lights are flickering away, and there are fires of beams flying all over the place from time to time. *There're probably many people fighting there, are there? From the way things look here, the inner wall on the other side is showing flashes as well. Even an amateur can understand that the battlefield is being expanded. Those may be the enemy unit from Neo Zeon and the Federation mobile suits chasing after it…to us who just saw the streets wrecked and have to watch for stray shots, there's no point determining who's friend or foe here. Everything will just put us in danger, and may even land in front of us in the next instant. Since the explosion was strong enough to create a hole in the colony, we won't survive if we stay in the air-raid shelters.*

No matter where we are, the danger present will never change. Banagher convinces himself and puts his head into the assistant's seat window again. "Please let everyone get in." He said, and the elderly man looks back wordlessly.

"Or else I'll shout that you guys are the ones who started this battle."

Banagher whispers and exerts more force on the hand gripping onto the door handle. At this moment, the facts don't matter. The most important thing is that they won't be able to get away if the evacuees with killing intent surround them. "This guy…" Banagher ignores the groan of the man in the driver's seat and looks over the elderly man. Both of them look at each other for several seconds, and the elderly man then looks over at the man on the driver's seat, indicating with his expression to open the passenger seat.

"EVERYONE, GET ON!"

Banagher yells as he opens the back seat. He nods at the unmoving elderly man appreciatively, and pushes Micott and the rest inside.

No matter how wide this high class limo is, the place is as packed as sardines with 9 people in there. Banagher pokes his upper body out from the back seat and puts himself the car like he's sitting on a box to allow him to put himself in the car. He knocks his still trembling hand onto the roof of the car, indicating that everyone's on board. The limo seems to give up as it honks and starts to move forward. They avoid the evacuees that ran onto the road and head towards the airtight wall

facing the moon. There's wind blowing because the car's moving forward and the air's flowing to the hole. This wind whips up dust and litter, and the slowly-blowing wind become a whirlwind and is sucked into the vacuum. The air inside the colony shouldn't be sucked out that easily, but in this situation, it seem that an emergency repair can't repair that hole that's created from an explosion. Some people amongst the evacuees have already put on their oxygen masks.

The airtight walls of the air-raid shelters under the Community Center and the artificial hills are closed up one after another. The people who can' evacuate in time run off to the next air-raid shelter, and a beam that looks like thunder echoes through the sky. Banagher looks inside the car, and Micott are the other girls are clinging onto each other. Takuya doesn't have anything to comfort them about and remains silent. The abnormal air that fills the colony and the sounds and lights of violence overwhelm this place, causing everyone to be numb about this.

What in the world is this? Banagher doesn't have the strength to meet anyone in the eyes and mutters to himself. It's been less than 20 minutes since he first witnessed the flames of the battle, but there wasn't anything before. They're in an ordinary daily life that nobody can change, but why is it that the lives of many are overturned in just 10 minutes? The daily life that made him so 'disjointed', and the sturdy walls that surround them are all so weak.

Even if he doesn't feel that he's able to blend into his surroundings, he doesn't want everything to be overturned just like that. He doesn't know what caused the war, but he can't allow those people to die without even knowing why or what happened before they were vaporized inside the explosion. It can't be helped if it was a war, but this unreasonable sudden attack is just like a terrorist attack. This overly extreme circumstance doesn't allow for anyone to vent their emotions.

But—just as he's thinking about this, his body and mind is starting to get used to this. Banagher notices that he's already starting to be able to react calmly and accordingly rather than being drowned in the dissipated of the part. There's no 'disjointedness' there, and no suffocation. It's like he's awakened, or like a blindfold's removed.

Maybe my mind is really wrong somewhere. Banagher presses onto his pulsating forehead. He notices that he also has an impulse to let his head knock into the roof of the car to spill out whatever's inside, but realizes that it's better to follow this unknown instinct. If not, he won't be able to survive and save 'her'. Such rational thoughts are telling him

off inside his mind.

“Audrey…!”

Banagher looks over at the airtight wall facing the moon in front of him, and subconsciously yells out. An explosion appears in the sky again, immediately lighting the airtight wall that’s covered in darkness silently.

Part 15[edit]

Snow dances about in the sky, and this snow is coming from the colony, glowing as they enter the darkness. Of course, these things aren’t real snow, but the sand, rubble and burnt remains of the plants or electric cars that are flowing out of the hole. They’re giving off light by reflecting the sunlight, forming debris in the shoal space region and disappearing into the darkness. That scene seems to look like the colony’s shooting out snow.

As compared to the large space colony, that hole looks like a fingertip —however, the diameter is no smaller than 50m. the hole will spin together with the colony, sucking away the surrounding objects and the air. The small objects that look like snowflakes gather together, and Riddhe instinctively turns the camera of the <<ReZEL>> over there and looks at an object on the enlarged monitor. He feels that goosebumps rising up on his skin.

It’s a burnt car. Riddhe stares at the object that’s completely distorted in shape, and notices the fact that there’s no one inside. He hurriedly closes the enlarged screen and opens the visor of his helmet and wipes the sweat off before closing the visor again. He wants to wipe away the sweat floating out from his chest, but the normal suit he’s wearing won’t allow him to do so. His underwear is wet too, and he knows his socks are wet. He hasn’t even shot once, never even met an enemy, and yet—

It’s been past 30 minutes since the battle started. Even though he entered the battle zone <<Industrial 7>> together with the <<Nahel Argama>>, the Ian squad, including Riddhe, hasn’t seen any signs of enemies. They just know from the unconfirmed broadcast that half of their comrades were shot down, but they have no idea about what happened to the Norm’s squad inside the colony or how many enemies there are. Time passes just like that, and even the reliable laser communicator can’t receive intel due to the wall of the colony. Right now, what Riddhe and the rest, and the <<Nahel Argama>> can only do is to listen to the messy communications and decipher what’s going on through the interrupted information.

(Avoid fighting inside the colony! Don't take risks and go in.)

(Romeo 005's communication is cut. Please respond!)

(The manhunters…ECOAS' tank is destroyed. How's the aid!?)

(The enemy's equipped with psycommu! We're being picked off!)

(Just one unit…! One mobile suit actually…!)

Half of Norm's squad is wrecked. Riddhe remembers the voices of the wireless communicator, and checks where the allied machines are around the colony. Including his own unit, there are four <<ReZELs>> and 2 <<Jegans>> flying around, matching the relative velocity of the colony and starting at the large cylinder that has become a battlefield. If he were in a different group, he may be part of the group being watched; he may be fighting against the enemy's machine with the psycommu, and then poked holes all over the place by the <<Funnels>>, just like the machines that are blown up and scattered inside the inner walls of the colony.

(Romeo 002 notifying all units. Ian's squad is to cover the mothership. Don't let down your guard to the surroundings. The enemy unit may come out from the hole in the colony.)

Squad leader Ian seems to detect everyone's jumpy emotions. If he wasn't controlling them, the squad that's coming out of their lines might be jumpy and head to the colony. Riddhe can understand this feeling, and he's of the same too. It's too painful to wait and watch them fight a tough battle, and it'll be easier to just rush into the battlefield directly. However, even though he wants to get some credit in his fire battle, he can't help but think that this is a joke after knowing that there's only one enemy, and that enemy wrecked an entire squad. Even if the mobile suit is equipped with psycommu, that pilot's way too abnormal.

"Newtypes…that's just a superstition on those spacenoids' part."

This term is used to represent the different status of the space residents. Riddhe feels that the humidity of the 'home' is filling the cockpit, wants to lick his mouth, and steps on the pedal. The machine frame of the <<ReZEL>> shakes slightly as it floats towards the moon. The wall of the colony is moving on the monitor, and he sets the front screen onto the colony builder that's in front of the colony itself.

Riddhe looks at this 'Wheel' that takes up one-quarter of the colony and the head that looks like a 'Snail'. He remembers the name of the 'Snail' is called <<Magallanica>> and looks at the command module that's on the enlarged monitor, which is about the equivalent of a

snail's head. He sees the front end of the command console room that's not moving, and there's a white object the size of a thumb. That's the pure white ship body of the <<Nahel Argama>>

This first-of-its-kind large ship of the Federation army is just the size of a toy to the <<Magallanica>> that's over 5000m. Riddhe adjusts the wireless frequency and tries to probe for the communications between the <<Nahel Argama>> and the <<Magallanica>>. The radio channel is less effective than the basic wireless, but even with the Minovsky particles affecting, he should be able to hear something from such a close distance. Soon after, (We don't permit…you to enter the dock). A voice with static echoes, and the noise start to mess up the speaker inside the helmet.

"This facility is recognized by the colony association, and is legal for use by Anaheim Electronics…)

(We have a war here! As a Federation ship, this ship has the authority to carry out counter-terrorist measures!)

The voice covers the operator who's speaking emotionlessly, as Captain Otto's angry words echo through the static. This mobile suit squad is on the brink of collapse, and the badger-like old man who's normally cool-headed can't remain calm. Riddhe hears,

(<<Magallanica>>. I'm Alberto. Open up now.)

Another voice suddenly enters this conversation. Alberto—the associate Anaheim sent to ride on this ship. Riddhe remembers this man's face as he yapped about the <<Laplace's Box>> in the captain's room that will make anyone unhappy, and can't help but blurt, "That fatso. Why so arrogant at such a time…" Once he said that, a roar came from the other side of the wireless radio (Did, did you hear that!?), and the awkward voice of the operator on the other side can be heard, (Yes, I hear you.)

(Even the Vist Foundation doesn't have the authority to refuse the army. Open up.)

(But the chairman…)

(I'll take responsibility! Let us in if you don't want the manhunters to kill all of you!)

Does this guy think that he's controlling the entire army? Riddhe hears what can be said to be arrogant words, and feels uncomfortable again. However, the light that appears next cause him to widen his eyes. The guiding lights of the <<Magallanica>> start to light up, and the two

beams in the vacuum form a road.

The main thrusters exhaust behind the ship start to tremble slightly, and the <<Nahel Argama>> start to move forward slowly. The <<Magallanica>> opens its gateway and prepares to let the ship enter. From this move, it seems that Alberto's command was really effective. Ridhe sees that the wireless channel has been switched to the port master of the <<Magallanica>> instructing the ship. Riddhe looks forward, and can't close his mouth for several seconds.

"Who is that guy…"

He says he's just a subordinate, but why is it that a guy who only introduces himself as an associate of Anaheim can cause the subordinates of the large shareholder Vist Foundation to collapse just by saying his name? He finds that this is weird. Riddhe stares at the <<Nahel Argama>>, and his heart suddenly jumps by a sudden impact. Squad leader Ian, who unknowingly approached in his <<ReZEL>>, knocked into Riddhe's machine and taps on the calf of the machine's left leg.

(The mothership will send out the launch. Ensign Riddhe, go support the mothership.)

Captain Ian's voice can be heard through the contact loop better than the wireless communicator. "Yes" Riddhe answers, shaking up as he doesn't realize that Captain Ian was approaching him at all. *I can't survive like this.* He thought. "But we're in a battle now. Who's going to take the ride? And we're sending escorts?"

(It's the guests. The bigshot from Anaheim wants to enter the colony builder. The enemy doesn't seem to have snuck in, but don't let your guard down.)

After saying that, Ian's machine moves itself away and floats down to the right. He feels that he's been removed from combat duty, but Riddhe shoulders this unhappy feeling and moves towards the <<Nahel Argama>>. It's better to move his body than to wait for the enemy that might appear at random moments. Since the guests from Anaheim want to start moving, he wants to see what they're intending to do.

At the gravity zone right in the center of what looks like a snail's shell, the spacegate of the <<Magallanica>>, which itself is at least 300m in diameter, opens slowly as it bends down both sides of the solar panel. The large body of the <<Nahel Argama>> moves in. Riddhe slides through the partition from the right side, and activates the brake

thrusters to restrict his movements in front of the second gate. The first gate closes, and the area is starting to be filled with oxygen. As the digital indicator of the pressure gauge is rising, the <<Nahel Argama>> opens the back launcher, and a launch appears on the catapult.

The launch is a term borrowed from the navy. It refers to a small space submarine for communication use riding on a ship. The launch on the <<Nahel Argama>> is an old-styled ship used since the One Year War. There are handrails all over the sub, so the people outside can ride on it. In emergency use, this can also be used as an escape boat.

Right now, many people in normal suits are holding onto the handrails. The launch is carrying the people that look like a bouquet of lilies as it floats on the catapult. What's weird is that these people are all wielding recoilless rifles, and from the looks of things, it's like they're land soldiers ready to land. Their expressions are all covered by the helmet visors, which makes it impossible to see them, but from the way they're holding their weapons, one can assume that they're trained. This scene doesn't make them look like they're investigating a civilian outfit.

"What's going on…"

"Why is this happening…?"

It's like he's leading a private army—he can't tell if Alberto is inside the sub as he stares at the thruster jet light that flies out from the catapult. Soon after, the second gate is opened, and the <<Nahel Argama>> follows the launch and enters the <<Magallanica>>'s dock.

Part 16[edit]

It's rather scary riding on the cargo lift at the airtight wall and moving 3,000m in the air. The lift that's used for moving doesn't have a wall or a ceiling, and the limo can be said to be fixed on a metal block, moving up to the slanted surface of the airtight wall. Of course, the higher the height, the closer the fires of the battlefield in the air. The fires and the mobile suit thruster jets that pass through the clouds are blinking, causing the defenseless limo to be lit up. Whatever that happens in the next ten minutes will be left to the heavens.

The doors leading from the colony to the 'Snail' are all over the artificial sun, and there're 6 of them. Each of them are airtight walls that are 15m wide. The limo reaches one of them, and Banagher immediately leaps out of the limo. They're near the axis of the colony, so this place is completely free of gravity, and if he doesn't mess up how he kicks the ground, he won't find it hard to move around. He has to move for

another 50m before he gets to the door, but Banagher finds a shortcut after taking a few steps.

He just came by here with Audrey a few hours ago, so he vaguely remembers where the roads are. “Oi, Banagher! Wait!” Banagher hears Takuya’s voice and stands in front of the partition and looks up at the large wall. This large wall that’s used to transport goods is tightly shut, but there are access points on both sides for people to use. They used these doors to enter the ‘Snail’ a while ago.

Another shot may come flying here when they stand around like that. Banagher presses the button for access, but the passage point seem to be locked, and there doesn’t seem to be any reaction from the number lock beside as he pressed on it. *We can’t do without a cardkey.* Banagher clicks his tongue and returns back to the car.

Takuya, who’s carrying Haro, asks, “No go?” and Banagher moves by him as if he’s trying to cut short the answering time and head towards the limo. Most likely, there’s something wrong with the fixations as the limo’s still stuck on the lift and unable to move. While the man on the driver’s seat is working on the car, the youths in the passenger seats all leave one after another. Micott looks around uneasily and kicks the ground to fly at Banagher. Seeing her like this, Banagher yells, “FORGET ABOUT THAT CAR!”

“HURRY UP AND OPEN THAT DOOR!”

It’s unknown if they heard it or not as the men from the Foundation aren’t looking over, merely saying things like “It’s stuck” and “There’s a safety release for emergency use on that door.” The youths are also all gathered around the door and not moving about as the blueish-white moon shines on them, causing Banagher to feel a chill. The flashing of the lights and the sounds of the explosions are much sharper than before, and the time interval between each explosion is becoming shorter. These heavy vibrations seem to happen at the same time as the heavy tremors.

This indicates that the battlefield is coming closer, and a huge profile grazes past the door on the other side, seemingly proving his intuition. That mysterious profile in the vortex-shaped clouds is the mobile suit with four wings, and on the other side of the clouds that are sliced up is a mobile suit the size of a thumb when viewed from here. I saw that before. It’s the main unit of the Federation army…the <<Jegan>>, right?

The main body that looks a lot finer than the 4 wings shoots out the thruster jet lights and adjusts its position. Banagher looks up to see the

situation, and feels that he's having goosebumps. He can predict what's going to happen next—or rather, the 'killing intent'-like thing the <<Jegan>> in front of him is releasing cause him to feel this. In other words, he knows that the mobile suit is about to fire.

"GET DOWN!" He immediately shouts out and knocks into Micott, who's in front of him. He can hear Micott cry out, and just when their floating bodies are crashing into the wall, the flash and heat waves come from behind. His hair is charred, his neck feels hot and painful, and a strong heat is expanding in the wall. After a short while, a firework-sounding explosion pierces the ears, and the air that lets out a cracking sound charge over as an impact. Banagher cuddles Micott and crashes into the wall, and the recoil cause the floating body to touch the ceiling. The bodies that lose their senses of up and down take the impact. The air they breathe is hot, and a sharp pain can be felt from the head that's hit. Banagher closes his eyes and exerts more strength in his arms and he hugs Micott harder. He's being flipped by this wild hot air, and can only pray that the next pain isn't fatal.

After quite a while, the heat and the sounds of explosions vanish.

Banagher can hear himself breathing frantically, and fearfully opens his eyes. He sees the illuminator that's blown into bits and scattered all over as glass, and then, about 10m away, there's the floor. Banagher realizes that he's floating near the ceiling, but the cruel situation below him cause him to stop think, and the cruel scene takes his breath away.

The lift that's attached to the door is completely melted, and the black charred mark is extended out to the partition in a straight line. The construction materials that are burnt black is still giving off smoke due to the heat, and the scalding hot air is coming from there. Banagher, who's standing there, smells the stench of ozone, and uses his sleeve that's covered with dust to cover his nose. This is a direct hit from a mega-particle cannon—that <<Jegan>> used a beam rifle, and the stray shot hit the door. The hi-energy shot that can pierce even the armor of a mobile suit rips aside the ordinary metal like clay. The beam was too hot, and a crack's formed on the floor as it melted and cooled. It just looks no different from a hot giant snake slithering through. He can't even find a part of the limo, and nothing that can be called corpses. There's a lot of debris floating beside the door, swaying like a mirage. Nothing's moving through their own strength. The men from the Foundation, Micott's friends, all of them vanished perfectly like a joke.

Yes, they vanished. They didn't die. Those people that I was talking to just now, those that were still breathing just disappeared suddenly. This isn't death. I won't admit that this is a way humans should die. Banagher thinks. In that case, nothing's left behind as they awaited their deaths without even feeling it. It's more like this is a wipeout instead of death. He can't summon his emotions and sentimental feelings, as what should exist are gone now—that kind of wipeout.

Suddenly, he senses someone else's smell in the ozone. This smell is similar to the smell from a hamburger kitchen, the smell of meat that's either cooked or steamed. He spits out some saliva to try and get rid of the weird stench in his nose, and focuses on Micott, who's in his clutches. Micott's still conscious, but her eyes are wide open as she looks at the catastrophe down below.

There's no response from her even as Banagher called her. Micott waves aside his arms that are shaking her and mutters, "Mario, Laila, Slyvia…" and floats towards the door. Banagher feels somewhat spooked by that monotone voice, and tries to catch up to Micott, but hears another voice and jerks his shoulders.

“Oi, are you guys alive…?” Right beside the partition that’s full of cinders, Takuya comes out from the under the shadows of the passage wall and pokes his head out.

Those eyes are exceptionally bright on the thoroughly blackened face. Takuya looks over as he controls his emotions that are about to collapse. It’s that protruding wall that protected Takuya from the heat waves. *He’s alive. But thinking about it, I shouldn’t have brought them along. It’s all my fault.* The thoughts that are caught between relief and regret climbs up Banagher’s heart.

“I’m still alive. What about you!?” Banagher finally manages to utter out as he sees Takuya floating over from the corner of the wall.

“I’m still alive…I am, but…” A sharp sound echoes, and Takuya’s eyes seem to be attracted by the burn scar of the burn on the floor, and he doesn’t even notice that Haro slipped out of his hands.

Banagher really wants to get over, but he can’t just leave Micott alone. “Don’t move, Micott doesn’t look fine at the moment.” He kicks the ceiling that’s covered with cinders and floats over to the melted lift. Micott’s back profile looks like it will float from the door to the outside, and that will be very dangerous. “Micott!” Just when he shouted out, another flash appears above the entrance, and the explosion pushes Banagher’s body back and surrounds him.

The <<Jegan>> has been firing continuous beam shots, and the diagonally-flying beams can be seen between the clouds as the pilot flies horizontally. The mobile suit with 4 wings agilely flip sideways to dodge those beam shots, flying and closing the distance with the <<Jegan>>. As both of them meet each other, the pink beam scatter, and the <<Jegan>>’s sliced in half at the waist. Swwosh, this sound of air being sliced echoes through the colony. Banagher knows that it used a beam saber, but he doesn’t understand when it was drawn or when it was sliced at all. The movements were too fast. The <<Jegan>> that’s sliced in half at the waist gives off sparks and disappears on the other side of the clouds. If one looks closely, he’ll notice that the beam saber in that machine’s hand is sliced as well.

“Amazing…”

The difference in level is too great. This isn’t just a question about the machine’s ability. This instinctive conclusion surges up at Banagher, and though he feels that the blood vessels in his forehead are throbbing again in pain, but the movements the 4-winged mobile suit does next cause him to forget his pain. The 4-winged that defeated the enemy unit flies over at them.

The metal block that's about several tons is closing in, and the overwhelming mass covers the door. Just when he thinks that they'll crash, the 4 wings hurriedly rise up, and the 20m large giant opens its wings—The jet lights of the thrusters explode in front of the door. Banagher hurriedly uses his hands to cover his face and uses his entire body to endure the hot air that's blowing over wildly.

Then, the sound of the impact that rocked the door echoes in the air. Banagher holds down Micott, who's floating to the lift, and looks up to see the airtight wall where the metal giant with 4 large wings is at. The 4-winged machine sticks to the door that's 50m diagonally above on the left side, right at the door for ship-use, and the hidden arms within its wings open up. The 4 mechanical side arms latch onto the gap in the look and stick itself on the wall like insects. This humanoid-giant pulls out its beam saber and stabs it into the gap.

The hard and sturdy wall let out a white hot light as it melts, and the remaining beam particles that are scattered like welding sparks are scattered all over. Banagher sees this and hurriedly leaves where he is. Even if the fire's only the size of a mosquito coil, the beam particles that land can melt metal and leave a burnt black mark like the door. Banagher doesn't have time to think of what will happen if these particles land on humans and yanks Micott before trying his best to move away from the door. Banagher kicks the door several times, and Micott's hands start to move as she asks, "Banagher?" At this moment, her eyes have some life. Banagher retreats to the partition wall, and then kicks the ceiling to move to the floor.

The remains of beam particles that fall like rain cover the door, and the hot air has arrived. *It seemed that the 4-winged is trying to get to the <<Snail>>. Why is that so?* Banagher blankly feels Micott's body temperature as she continues to stick on him, and thinks, *Why? To take Audrey back? If that's the case, Audrey and Neo Zeon is—*

"OPEN THE DOOR! HURRY UP AND OPEN THE DOOR!"

Takuya seemed to have lost it too as he slams on the partition, and Haro's eyes are flashing as it floats about in the air blankly. "I DON'T WANT, I DON'T WANT THIS! I HATE THIS!!" Banagher feels that Micott, who's screaming and clinging onto him, is somewhat annoying at this point, and looks around. There're no other exits besides the partition and the access point. *Since the men from the Foundation who're holding onto the card key are gone, there's no other way to advance, is there? What should we do? Even if we retreat back to the inner wall, the lift's wrecked.*

Calm down. If you panic, you won't be able to deal with this. A voice

buried deep inside his memories mutters. Banagher takes a deep breath, and the blood vessels in his forehead start to pulsate. He feels a chill up his spine. *Something's coming.* This premonition that's like a sense of danger hits his heart and causes him to look back at the partition behind him.

The soot that's floating in the sky has become cinder as it clings onto the partition. At the center of it, a reddish-hot light is formed in a blurry manner, and immediately expands. The heat source protruding out from the partition starts to cover all the corners of the large partition. As the red heat in the center is about to become white, Banagher shouts, "TAKUYA, STOP!" and pulls him, who's slamming at the door, to the back of the wall. The melted construction materials scatter all over the place, and a gust and an exploding sound roar inside.

The sturdy partition is destroyed from the 'Snail's side by a volcanic-like explosiveness. Banagher and the rest are hidden behind the wall, curling themselves up and bracing themselves for the storm that's coming at them. The sound of thruster jets can be heard amidst the sound of twisted metal, and a large object seem to be covering them fly past them together with the storm. Bangher waits for the heat to subside, peeks out from the wall and looks at the door. A waverider-like machine flies out from the door, and Banagher thought that it will simply spin once, but this machine immediately transforms into a humanoid shape and pulls out a beam saber.

At the same time, the Vulcan guns on the head of the machine are shooting at the 4-winged hanging on the airtight wall. The 4-winged machine stops trying to cut the door and attacks the transformable mobile suit. Both of them clash their sabers in the midst of the clouds, giving off light. Using this time, Banagher looks at the partition that has a huge hole. He's cautious as he doesn't know if there are any more machines coming in front behind, but there doesn't seem to be too many presences. The area on the other side of the crumbled partition is empty, and further on in the partition inside, there's another hole. This is an emergency means the transformable mobile suit did to enter the colony, using its beam weapons to destroy all the particles. There's still some red-hot light on the sides of the hole, giving off hot air that seem to be able to burn the lungs. The hole is 15m in diameter, so Banagher doesn't find it hard to move through the partition without touching the crumbled parts.

The door leading to the 'Snail' is opened. Banagher swallows his saliva and doesn't think of anything else as he grabs Takuya, who seemed to be shocked, and says, "Calm down, Takuya. Haven't you seen that kind of transformable mobile suit? What unit does it belong to?"

Banagher calls him with utmost self-restrain, and Takuya's terrified expression is more or less calmed down as he answers with a trembling voice, "I, I don't know, but…"

"If it's the Zeta-type transformable mobile suits, it should belong to the Federation's Londo Bell…"

"That means a Federation's ship is at the 'Snail', right? If you can get to the dock, they'll protect you. Head over with Micott." If they move down through where the transformable mobile suit went, they will naturally reach the dock. He can't get both of them involved.

"Alright?" Banagher adds on and pushes Haro, which is floating in mid-air, back to Takuya. Takuya hurriedly catches it and regains some calm as he looks back at Banagher and asks, "What about you?"

"Audrey may be around here. I'm going to the residential area."

"NO! DON'T BREAK AWAY FROM US!" Micott, who was originally crouched down, suddenly shouted out. Banagher looks back at her in surprise and sees her teary eyes. Even though an unexpected pain reaches his heart, the command in his mind is stronger, telling him not to stop. "I'll leave it to you then, Takuya." After saying that, Banagher turns to jump off the floor and fly sideways through the hole towards the neighboring airight wall.

Banagher's hand touches the ceiling of the airtight wall, and hears Micott's hysterical scream "BANAGHER!!" from behind. *Am I being too cold?* He wonders as he continues to look forward and move on. The mobile handrail on the wall can still be used, and there should be a lift to the residential area at the airtight wall. The environment maintenance system at the 'Snail' seems to be fine, and there's no air leaking out. *It's alright. I can go over.* Banagher mutters to himself and grabs onto the mobile handrail.

He passes through the airtight wall that's like a large tunnel, through about 5 partitions, and finally sees the gateway to the 'Snail' right in front of him. The construction materials are floating all over the place, perhaps as a result of being kicked down by the transformable mobile suit, and some of these materials are even floating to the other side of the gateway. Banagher however ignores this as he heads straight for the lift. The surroundings are really quiet, and he can only vaguely hear explosions rocking the colony far away. This situation causes Banagher to find it weird. Even if the colony builder's in a standby phase, why is it that not a single person's here with all this commotion? Banagher follows the memory of his intrusion before and tries to search for a road as he quickens his steps.

There's a lift in this place that's similar to the one in his memories, and the battery's still running. Banagher controls his anxious emotions and touches the control panel on the wall. The lift that's moving up lets out a slight electronic sound and stops in front of him. Banagher leaps into the compartment without waiting for the lift to open fully.

Immediately, a black hole that appears in front of him is holding down on him. The stinging sour stench enters his nose. *This is a muzzle.* Banagher's mind understands this, and his mind becomes blank. He's being pushed by that black muzzle as he blankly moves back.

A tall and large white man walks off the lift, and the thing he's holding and pointing at Banagher isn't a pistol, but a portable wireless speaker with the antenna modified into a muzzle. The black eyes on the bearded face are moving about, and after checking that there's nobody else around, the man points his stare and the muzzle at Banagher.

The stinging smell on the jacket floats over with the man's odor. This is the smell of gunpowder—different from the stench of ozone when a beam weapon's used. It's a smell that has more direct killing intent. *I'll be killed.* Such a thought rushes down his spine, and he, who's backed into the wall, finds that his body is all stiff now.

He's not a Federation soldier, and neither is he an employee of the Vist Foundation. He looks really lethargic and careless, but this middle-aged man is staring at him so much that he can't move. Banagher feels that he lost his strength in his lower body, which feel like they're in zero gravity, and looks back at the middle-aged man's expressionless face like a stone. Suddenly, gunshots and flashes can be heard from the lift, and the sounds of metal colliding echoes throughout the passage.

Banagher can't help but close his eyes, and as he opens his eyes again, the muzzle is gone. The bearded man kicks the floor and looks over at the other men running out of the lift. It's a man who's seemingly hurt and a blond man who's lending his shoulder for shoulder. *Are they the subordinates of this bearded man?* As Banagher wonders, the blond man's fierce gaze captures him, and the hand holding onto the wireless speaker points it at him without hesitation. *He'll definitely fire this time!* Banagher leans his back at the wall, but at this moment…

"Leave the kid alone."

The bearded man's interrupting words causes the blond man to put down his gun. He looks like he just recovered as he looks at the bearded man, and carries his injured comrade. The bearded man

follows him and grabs the mobile handrail. The men leave the lift without looking back, and soon turn at a corner and disappear. “HAVEN’T WE MADE CONTACT WITH MARIDA YET!?” An angry roar rings as it’s becoming faint in the midst of the deep rumbling sounds due to the explosions.

Marida. He heard of this name before, but just can’t think about how he knows about this. Banagher lets his stiff shoulder move towards the lift. The entrance is giving off sparks, and the sounds of short circuits can be heard. The lift control panel is wrecked, and from the sparks just now, it’s obvious that it’s due to the gunshot he heard just now.

I can’t get to the residential area. As he thinks about this, his mind start to start moving, and the body that’s frozen in fear starts to move slowly. Banagher grabs onto his trembling hands and floats about blankly in zero gravity.

Part 17[edit]

The pure white ship body of the <<Nahel Argama>> is shown on the screen, reminiscent of the Pegasus-class assault carrier. During the One Year War, the Pegasus class ship played a pivotal role in the Federation army’s mobile suit development plan, and its unique body left a huge impression on Cardeas, who had already left the army. That ship, the <<White Base>>, far exceeded battle expectations, thoroughly uprooting the old weapons and becoming a flagship that signaled the era of mobile suits.

It’s been 17 years ever since then, and the <<Nahel Argama>> is entering the dock of the <<Magallanica>> together with the transformable mobile suits. *Why must you open the gateway?* Cardeas really wants to tell off the operator, but right now, there’s no one else in this command console other than him. The fan-shaped operator consoles are unmanned, and half the machines have stopped. The record chips and empty pods that have changed color due to being burnt float about in zero gravity. He can see that they have frantically tried to destroy all classified documents, but he can’t confirm if the operators all left safely. Most of the surveillance cameras inside the facility are down, and there’s no contact with the security center. The poison called the Special Forces has spread through the <<Magallanica>>, causing it to be dysfunctional. Right now, Cardeas can’t even understand what’s going on in the outside world, which is just outside the door.

Right now, the only place that poison hasn’t spread to is the cargo deck. The multi-surface monitor display show the <<Nahel Argama>> from many angles. Cardeas continues to spray hemostatic on his

shoulder as he looks at the bridge construct that looks like a horse's head, adjusting the wireless frequency. It's at least 3km away from her to the cargo deck, but the communication status with the <<Nahel Argama>> is really bad. The camera shows only noise, and Captain Otto Mitas' voice is rather interrupted in this noise. He can only continue to adjust the release and receiving frequency to ensure this communication frequency he finally manages to check.

"We accept this last minute inspection, but I hope that you'll take back your forces. We'll just increase the damages like this."

(A battle has started, and our side has taken huge damage. We can't retreat if we don't silence the enemy forces.)

Cardeas continues to repeat his words, and Otto continues to answer as per usual. From his voice, Cardeas feel that Otto isn't a strong-willed captain. He probably accepted this mission without even knowing exactly what the situation is, and is troubled as the situation is getting worse. He's a typical commander who's too focused on calming himself down after things happen and seeing things in a short-sighted manner.

Even if the invasion of the special forces of Londo Bell can't be helped, but if it's not because of her being in his hands, the 'Sleeves' won't have such a strong reaction. Right now, the situation is such that both parties have become victims out of coincidence. But the current situation now doesn't allow for him to explain. At this moment, the members of the <<Magallanica>> are either being slaughtered, or the number of victims in the colony continues to increase. It's not that the mobile suit of the 'Sleeves' is running rampant, but that the Federation pilots who aren't used to actual combat expanded the battlefield and caused this to happen. He can understand this from the words of the commander Otto.

"Then, please at least let the Special Forces slaughtering their way through the <<Magallanica>> to fall back. This is the starting point of the UC project. Don't forget, most of the people here are either civilian technicians or researchers."

(But, Neo Zeon now…)

"Captain, I know that this is a correct decision militarily, but this mission includes a high level of political problems. You may have to bear responsibility based on your own decision. I want to speak to the Anaheim employee with you."

First, accept the enemy's proposal and standpoint, and then say out

threatening words from an observer's standpoint, and finally, state a request which the other party won't feel that they're at a loss; this is just an initial skill in starting negotiations, but it's enough to bait Otto. Cardeas faces the silent communication panel and asks, "Are you there?"

"Just tell him that Cardeas Vist wants to speak with him. This should be enough to control the situation."

If Martha's behind this mission, she will definitely send escorts. Anaheim Electronics belong to that woman, so which employee will it be? Cardeas recalls many names and faces, and at this moment, Otto answers, (But they're already—) Before he can finish, the communication's dead.

It's not because of the Minovsky particles, but because the power's down, causing the communication panel to be dead. *They're here?* Cardeas closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. He takes out the pistol in his pants' pocket, puts his hand on the controls and slowly looks behind. He sees several men wielding recoilless rifles, and the men in normal suits land silently on the floor behind the chairman's seat.

From the smooth movements, he can tell that they're well-trained soldiers, but the normal suits they're wearing are the ones used by employees. Cardeas thought that the Special Forces will be here, and looks somewhat shocked as he stares at the intruders' faces. These men are all wearing visors to cover their faces, so it's impossible to see who they are. Cardeas' stares at these people that aren't moving, reaches his hand behind him, and another person lands in the middle fo the group.

He has a pistol on his waist, but his hands aren't holding onto a rifle. With the other people watching, that normal suit walks towards Cardeas and opens the visor on the helmet. Immediately, Cardeas understands what's going on, and forgets that he has a pistol behind him.

"It's you…"

There's nothing else to talk about. The normal suit in front of him remain sill, just staring straight at Cardeas.

Part 18[edit]

Banagher feels an explosion in the air, and the construction materials that immediately melt and crumble let out a heavy sound. The dock itself just looks like it got electrocuted as it trembles, and the hot air

that blows from time to time causes Banagher to be unable to stand still.

The large amount of shrapnel that's blown over by the explosive pressure slam into the reinforced steel structure, and the deep sounds of cars colliding can be heard. *Is there a fire?* He can see the silhouette of a crane in the slightly crimson red flame, lighting the conveyer belts that are all criss-crossed. However, the lights themselves aren't enough to illuminate the entire factory. Banagher steps on the metal board that floats beside his feet, grabs onto the steel structure beside him. He still can't tell whether the entrance has any stray shots, and if he floats around randomly, he will be pancaked by the flying metal scraps due to the explosions.

He continues to move through the 'Snail' to try and find a lift that can be used, and accidentally arrives at the construction block where the materials for building the colony are refined. This fully automated factory can purify and reprocess the debris from space that's floating around before sending it over to the 'Wheel'. But right now, all operations have ceased, and the night lights are the only things around. This factory that's filled with mini mobile suits and small working launchers is really large, and no matter how far he walks, it's like he hasn't touched anything that resembles a wall. The floor and ceiling can't be seen from here, and the flames are swaying far away, lighting the reinforced metal skeleton that's like a ghost.

It's like a scene in a nightmare. Banagher's driven by the fear stuck in his throat and tightly grabs onto the metal frame. He can't stop trembling ever since that bearded man pointed at him with a gun. The impulse in his heart has calmed down too, and he's feeling anxious, thinking that he might not be able to leave this place forever. Banagher grabs onto those objects that feel more like walls, and tell himself that he can definitely find the exit as long as he heads down the wall. If he moves through the construction area and passes through the fire, he should be able to reach the port. Over there, he might be able to meet up with Takuya and Micott, and he'll definitely find a way to get to the residential area.

Really? He ignores this weak questioning in his heart, and as he turns his tense neck, something white seems to move by his eyes. It's the normal suit of a worker, a human. The thing that floats here with the debris has its back on Banagher and floats off from him. Banagher immediately thinks of that bearded man he just saw, kicks the structure and floats over to the normal suit.

I just want to see that guy's face no matter who he is. I want to talk; I

want to see if I'm mentally normal. "The guy over there!" Banagher yells out and grabs the normal suit while almost knocking into him. But on see the front, he's speechless. The visor of the helmet is shattered, and black liquid's flowing out.

The chest has a hole the size of a thumb. The blood that seeps out from it is covered with a sooty surface. Banagher accidentally sees the inside of the helmet that's battered into a blob of blood, and immediately lets go of the hand of the normal suit frantically. The shattered visor let out blood, creating a sound that sound like a plastic bag being stepped on.

It sounds like vomiting. This is a blood bag in the shape of a normal suit, a slab of meat where its already hard to identify where the mouth is, giving off a clear vomiting sound. Banagher screamed and kicked the normal suit aside, using the momentum to move his body backwards and instinctively grabs onto the frame of the conveyer belt beside him to steady himself. *I can't stay here. I have to get out of here.* He doesn't even know where to go as he lets the completely spine-chilling body float in the midst of the dark void.

The countless floating objects and the scraps that may be mixed in with flesh pass by under the night lights. There's a burnt smell in the air, and the hot air coming at his face is becoming stronger and stronger. Banagher can sense the steamed meat-like stench and the sounds of vomits, and he feels that his relatively intact sanity is being corroded bit by bit. He moves his limbs and heads towards the flames. He doesn't want to die; he doesn't want to let himself think that humans die like that. His mother's death was a lot more dignified in the sense that at least her body wasn't floating around like wastage and showing an ugly state of giving off gas that's accumulated inside. He can't feel sad or even mourn for them, and will just naturally feel disgusted.

Unlike animals, who only distinguish life and death through their instincts, humans have to comply with the etiquettes of life and death. Humans have to use the possibilities within to show the world the power and kindness that belong to them. This is building a civilization, a duty those people who entered space has to bear responsibility for. *In the end, humans are animals too.* Such reasoning is an excuse the people living in space can't accept—*unexpected words appear within his memories, and as the blood vessels in his forehead throb, a beam shot's scar appear in his eyes, still piping hot. There's a hole 5m wide on the thick wall behind the floating fuel and the floating cables.* I can get through. *Banagher firmly believes without proof as he holds his breath and kicks the twisted metal frame.*

At the same time, he closes his eyes and uses his arms to protect his head. The burning sensation on the skin immediately moves behind, and the cool air surrounds him. The silence around him hurts his eyes, and even though he knows that the surroundings have changed, he

doesn't have the courage to open his eyes and check the situation. It should be the dock if he gets by the wall, but the surroundings are way too quiet. Perhaps he may have gone the wrong way, and he'll be sucked by vacuum. Banagher doesn't dare to exhale even once as he floats in the unknown space. A deep sound suddenly rings, and a strong flash of light appears.

The same sounds and lights continue on, lighting the space that's covered in darkness. Banagher opens his eyes and peeps through the gap to look around. He sees many white lights on the ceiling high above, and there are lights from the bottom too. These lights that are intersecting each other are all gathered at the construct in the middle of the space. It is 20m tall and about 6m wide, and it looks like a building under construction from the metal frame and the beams that form the outside.

There're no signs of anyone around, and there's not even a single worker on the four walls. There's a large handling port gateway on one of the walls, but it's tightly shut, and the airlocks are also sealed up. Is it a storeroom or a workshop? *No, this is really an unnatural isolation. It can probably be called a private room.* Banagher thinks.

This sealed room that's 30m wide on each side and can be called a cubic room is completely empty—and right in the middle, there's a construct that's like a building and him, an anomaly. Banagher looks around with his eyes that are already used to the light, looks at the hole he used to enter, and then turn to look at the construct standing right in the middle of the room. He pass by the metal frames and turns to the front where the lights are gathered. The construct that looks to be about 6 to 7 story tall is hollow inside, and it's holding some sort of a machine.

"This is…"

He can't help but let out his hoarse voice, and then shuts his mouth again. The pure white armor is basked under the lights, showing the humanoid shape of a mobile suit. There's a translucent visor at roughly where the eyes are, and there's a protruding long horn on the forehead —

That's right; this is the white mobile suit he saw from the subway window this morning. Banagher's body floats with the momentum and hits the handrail, and can feel a slight impact on his back as he looks at the giant in front of him blankly. The humanoid-shaped machine that seemed to be a sign for the abnormalities happening yesterday is held in place by a box-shaped container cage, and the giant that occupies his line of sight entirely is standing there.

Looking closely, he can see that there are armored joints on the pure white surface, covering its entire body like circuits. It has steel cables dangling all over it, and it looks to be ready to be sent off for packing. What's weird is the object that's like a large metal wheel binding the limbs. This sturdy metal rings that binds the elbows, wrists, knees and feet are held in place in the sturdy ring. It'll be too ridiculous to call it a seal for transport. It's like someone's scared that it will suddenly go violent and sealed it up.

The cockpit at the abdomen is opened, and as he bends down, he can see that the cockpit door's opened. The giant is sealed inside the sealed room—the numerous sculptures and old tapestries of the legendary beast in the Vist's mansion; these factors seem to come together as Banagher feels an ominous presence. He swallows his saliva and look at the airlock beside the wall. He guesses by the direction that the port's on the other side once he gets over. *Maybe I can even unlock it from inside; I really don't want to stay here anymore.* Banagher's being driven by such emotions as he intends to kick the handrail of the passage he just passed through, and he then sees a vinyl sheet that's used to cover a mobile suit floating in front of him.

The vinyl sheet's blocked by the frame, but it continues to slowly fly to the hole in the wall where the air's moving to. Banagher feels a chill as he sees the dust under the lights flow to a certain spot, and looks around.

"Is the air leaking?"

This isn't an air flow caused by a ventilation unit. There's a hole leading to the outside wall. The air of the 'Snail' is gradually moving out, and Banagher has to get a normal suit even if he wants to get to the port or the residential area. He looks at the large sealed room and checks the types of warning. A red light's lit up, indicating that the firefighting apparatus is there, but there're no green lights, which indicate where the normal suits are in emergency situations, to be found. The firefighting apparatus should have an OBA but it's useless when this place is full of vacuum.

There should be a changing room outside the airlock, but he can't be certain about whether there's vacuum there. Banagher floats about weakly in the sealed room and turns to look at the abdomen of the giant, at the black hole that seems like it will suck him in—

"If it's a mobile suit cockpit, there should be a normal suit prepared somewhere…"

If possible, he doesn't want to go near it, but it can't be helped. Banagher kicks the handrail and flies over to the giant. He grabs onto the cockpit cover to slow himself down, and use the momentum to get in.

The air's filled with the scent of heated electric cables, and the all-view screen isn't activated. There's only the many screens sticking to the inside of the sphere-shaped inner wall, lying motionlessly in the darkness. The seat's being supported by a linear support, and it looks like it's floating in the middle of the cockpit. The pedal that's built together with the chair and the control joysticks look very similar to the <<Jegan>> he saw in a practical in Anaheim Electronics. However, the standard-looking linear seat has a unique equipment above it, giving off a unique glow.

The frame looks like it will occupy the whole of the pilot's head as it's poked out from the chair in such a way that the pilot's view won't be obstructed. There are mechanical arms on both left and right sides to steady the head. One will associate this with a torture tool just by looking at it, but there's no other place to put them in this narrow cockpit. Banagher sits on the linear seat and moves the mobile display monitor to the front. The orange activation light is glowing, indicating that it's in a standby phase.

"It's still working…"

He presses the activation switch under the lights button, and a deep buzzing sound echoes throughout the cockpit. The all-view screen isn't activated yet, but three screens are all lit, and the system starts to scan. The side-monitor display on the left shows all sorts of power output indicators. The speedometer, distance meter are all being shown one by one. Its basic controls are just like a mini-mobile suit, but the output of the power and the indicators are all way higher.

The giant starts to wake up slowly, and its breathing reaches Banagher as a tremor. It's different from the mini-mobile suit that's for civilian use. This thing is a weapon, a hi-tech machine he never saw before, a real mobile suit—Banagher's heart is feeling uneasy for some reason as he understands this, causing him to feel jumpy as he leans back on the hard-backed seat. Banagher looks around the inside of the cockpit that's lit up to look for any spare normal suits. This kind of cockpit should have its spares behind the display monitor. Banagher uses his fingers to feel his way through the gaps of the monitor, and he intends to reach out under the linear seat, but hears noise coming in from the speakers inside the cockpit.

The side-screen on the right shows a communication window, and

static's showing on it. At a corner of the screen, the words 'Engine Sector 24. Passage 3'. Perhaps it connected automatically as I seemed to have linked up with the communication speakers inside the 'Snail'. Banagher thinks that he may be able to get information on what's going on inside the colony, and touches the monitor to try and switch the channel frequency.

Material transport room, cargo deck, computer room, canteen; everywhere's just showing static, and the sounds just sound noisy. *Is it because of the Minovsky Particles' effect, or that the devices are wrecked?* Banagher has to give up, and can only turn his eyes away from the monitor, but a person's voice suddenly stuns him.

(So Martha instigated you…I understand.)

It's a man's voice, and he heard of it before. Banagher stares at the monitor that's still full of static that indicates that the area is the 'Command Console' and diverts his focus to listen to the voice coming through. (You intended…to make use of the army…but you're the ones being made use of…huh?) This voice that's filled with some anger continues on, and Banagher immediately associates it with the arrogant sounding 'You risked yourself too much.' he heard a while ago.

(The Federation wants to get the <<Laplace Box>>, and the chance is right in front of them…then…do you think…they're thinking about the Foundation's welfare…?)

He can't hear the voices of the person he's talking to, but Banagher understands that the one talking now is Cardeas Vist. "Laplace, Box?" He subconsciously repeats these words. He feels that he heard of this before, but just can't remember when and where he did.

(That's why…you're not thinking enough. If this continues, Neo Zeon will be vanquished, and the Federation will continue its dominion, but what next? Humanity's enemies are just real aliens then, and the army will lose its value…in this case, Anaheim and the Foundation will wilt.)

It's just like what any man in a high and mighty position will say. Even though he doesn't know who Cardeas' talking to, Banagher understands that his words mean that they're using war as business—the theory death merchants apply to, and from his tone, it seems that the relationship between the Vist Foundation and Anaheim Electronics is a lot more complicated than what the rumors indicate.

They're talking about something horrifying. Another war will start again. Audrey's pressing expression appears in front of Banagher, and just

when he intends to increase the volume, (and for this, you…), Cardeas' voice is interrupted again. After a while, the deep voice rings, (Stop it, you'll regret this.), causing Banagher to feel cold.

Killing intent can be heard from the noise, and Banagher feels that Cardeas' holding back his anxious breathing as his enemy is getting anxious while intending to do something. (You're just being used by Martha, you…) Cardeas groans, and Banagher inadvertently jumps up as the ample killing intent explodes as sounds.

BAM! BAM! The sharp sounds of breaking can be heard. (DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!) This voice that seem to belong to someone echoes through the wireless speaker. Banagher's stiff hands are grabbing the display monitor as he continues to stare at the noise on the window. Cardeas' voice has vanished as noise suddenly explodes through the inside of the cockpit.

Part 19[edit]

The flash occurs, a heavy sound of impact strikes from above, and the gust that nearly blows the bodies away strike the pipes that are intertwined. Audrey grabs onto a supporting pipe and prevents her body from being blown away in this zero gravity environment.

It's been 30 minutes since she passed through the forest in the residential area and took the lift out to the Industrial block. During this time, the sounds of battle get more and more intense, and she can even hear explosions inside the colony. However, the explosions just now aren't just as simple as being straw shots. Audrey opens her tightly closed eyes as she arrives opposite the refinery plants, and looks up. 200m away, the gate's shooting out fireballs, and as the black smoke scatters, she sees the profile of a mobile suit.

The heavy humanoid-shaped machine has 4 wings. It leaps out of the gate, accelerates and enters the Industrial block. It's the <<Kshatriya>>. The center axis of the rotating residential area, the Industrial block that passes through the center of the 'Snail's shell is very wide, and it has at least 300m of space, but it's still too many obstacles for a flying mobile suit. The <<Kshatriya>> immediately gets tangled by the conveyer belts that block its eye, and in the midst of the dim light, sparks are flying due to contact friction. However, the several-ton machine's inertia isn't eliminated so easily. Its moss green body crush the conveyor belts in the air that look like a spider web altogether as it slowly flies through the air of the Industrial block. The monoeye on the head is looking around, and looks over at the inner wall that's buried by a plant.

“Marida…is she looking for me?”

If not, there’s no reason for her to enter the colony builder that is hard to move around. Audrey thinks of the side of Marida’s face while Marida’s concentrating on piloting, and looks around, using her thoughts to tell Marida her location. The Minovsky particles are still effective, but the distance of 200m is still within the range of the sensor. However, it’s hard to look within the plant from the air. In this situation, she can’t depend on Marida to ‘sense’ her. Audrey’s intending to float to the building that looks like an office, but a sudden shot and boom that appears causes her to stop.

A strong gust of wind blows by, and a Federation mobile suit flies by low at a height of less than 20m. The <<Kshatriya>> shoots out the movement thrusters, and quickly dodges the Vulcan cannons that grazes by the mobile suit’s head before pulling out the beam saber. Both sides’ beam sabers clash, and just as the two giants are entering a sword battle, another incoming Federation unit rushes at the back of the <<Kshatriya>>. The humanoid-shaped Federation unit that’s closer swings its beam saber at the <<Kshatriya>>, and Audrey shouts out, “MARIDA…!”

The Federation unit uses its beam saber to slash at the <<Kshatriya>>, and at that moment, the 2 binders, or wings, at the back of the <<Kshatriya>> open and draw out the beam sabers hidden inside. The Federation unit that attacks from behind has its beam saber blocked by the particle sabers that are intertwined. Audrey’s eyes see the <<Kshatriya>> block the enemies from both front and back. The flashes light up the Industrial block, and the hidden arms behind slice the enemy behind with a blur. The Federation unit with its shoulders sliced off fall, and the medium blue body collapses into the plants on the inner wall.

BOOM. A deep sound rocks the colony. The flames of the explosion continue to expand down the pipes. The gust again strikes, and Audrey’s blown away by more than 10m before she can even grab onto something. Audrey sees that she’s about to crash into the liquid tank in her line of sight frantically uses her hands to hook herself onto a metal triangular structure. Suddenly, a ball the size of a football flies by her, and the sound of something knocking into the tank can be heard.

The ball bounces back. It flaps its two discs that look like ears, and the optical sensors inside the ball-shaped object flash. “You’re…!” The reason why she’s calling it as a person is because she remembers the tone of the owner who treated it as a friend. This robot used to be a

mascot that trended before. *This thing is called Haro, right?* Audrey steps off the frame and grabs the Haro floating in the air with both hands.

Audrey watches it flashes its eyes and say in a monotonous tone, (Hello, Audrey.), and this cause her heart to race. *Is that boy here?* She wants to look around to understand the situation, but she, who's choking from the smoke floating over, hears someone talking to her, "Don't stay in such a place!" causing her to panic and look up.

Banagher. She nearly calls out, but immediately swallows her words. The profile closing in through the smoke isn't the owner of this Haro. The age and attire is the same, but the slightly curled tea-colored hair and the Eastern-looking face is different from Banagher's. Just as she's wondering, another person floats over, and Audrey, who's completely defenseless, has a sense of danger.

The black-haired girl who looks to be of the same age is hiding behind the office building together with the boy, "HURRY UP!" Haro, who's in Audrey's hands, flaps its ears as its eyes flash, shouting, (Takuya, Micott) Audrey looks over at them as she holds onto the metal frame. The two people who are waving over from 10m away don't look like employees of the Vist Foundation or soldiers. But since she's basically in enemy territory, Audrey thinks that she can't just follow people and tries to look for a chance to escape. Suddenly, an explosive flash and sound that's a lot stronger than before happens.

The other Federation unit got taken down. The incoming hot wind blows between the gap between the plants, and Audrey carries Haro at her chest before grabbing onto the frame. The flying shrapnel stab into the liquid tank, and an explosion can be heard. The flames expand out, and Audrey sees that the cinders of the fire are flying at her.

There's no place to hide, and she can't hide. Audrey holds onto Haro tightly as her eyes move away from the cinders flying at her. *I'll die.*— the unrealistic feeling words cause her entire body to go numb for a moment, and she feels that a giant object flies over her.

The large amount of cinder shrapnel bounce off the metal, letting out a deafening rumble. Audrey, who feels that the heat's a lot weaker than before, turns her cringing neck behind. She sees a large hand, which has five fingers like a human's actuator, and also the handheld armaments connector. The hand and the medium-blue metallic arm are attached as they form a dam that successfully block the shrapnel and the heat in front of Audrey's eyes.

The head has a visor that's used to cover the eyes of the mobile suit's

inorganic face. Audrey sees the serial number on the machine being NAR-008 and sees that this is a Federation's unit. She isn't able to even gasp as her body freezes. She wants to immediately get away, but the cockpit at the abdomen opens, and the pilot asks "Are you hurt?" causing her to lose the chance to escape.

The pilot who probes his body out from the cockpit shows a shocked expression as he pulls his chin back. The helmet visor is opened, and a young man's face appears, "Kids too for that matter…! What are you doing here!?" The teenager angrily chides Audrey, and she doesn't answer as she looks back. At this moment, the boy and girl hiding at the office building floats over. "We escaped here because there's a hole in the colony!" The girl shouts back. "Is…is that so? Wait!" The pilot answers, and enters the cockpit. From his actions and expression, it looks like he's still not used to actual combat. Audrey concludes as she moves to the mobile suit's arm that has a shield equipped and checks the situation. The explosions are still going on, and the flames are slowly spreading throughout the colony. There's no sign of the <<Kshatriya>> in the air, so it seem that it moved to another block. The smoke continues to get thicker, and the eyes and throat are feeling irritated.

"Ordinary civilians. There're kids at the port…understood." The boy and girl look at the cockpit with their ash-riddled faces as they hear the interrupted voice of the pilot. The boy has a dark blue jacket with the logo of Anaheim Electronics. Audrey remembers that this is the same jacket as the kind Banagher wore, and says, "Well…" The boy and girl hear her and turn around. Just when Audrey thinks that this is bad, the black-haired girl is staring at her,

"Don't tell me you're…" The girl's interrupted by the sudden activation sound of the actuator, and the mobile suit arm that was acting as a dam shield moves and flips its palm up. Audrey hears the pilot say "Hurry up and get on", and her grip onto Haro is stronger now.

"It's dangerous here. Let me bring you to our ship."

The boy and the girl seem to heave a sigh of relief once they hear this. The boy steps off the floor first and floats to the palm of the mobile suit. He touches the armor covering the fingers and says, "It's a little hot, but there's no problems. Hurry up." The girl hears the boy's words and nods her head as she pushes Audrey's back. "Well, I…" "Talk later. You'll die if you stay here." Audrey's words are interrupted by the girl's words quickly, and just like that, she's taken to the hand of the mobile suit.

The ignition continues to echo, and the hot air blows at the ash-riddled

hair. In zero gravity, the air won't weigh differently because of the heat, so there's no convection. The flames will extinguish once they use up the surrounding oxygen, so the burning shouldn't remain for long. However, the collapse of the neighboring wall cause the air to flow, and the 'wind' will promote the burning and continue to make things worse. The automatic fire extinguishing facility is activated as sprinklers are spurting out water, but this will continue to cause the water to become steam. The flames will only continue to spread throughout the plant, and they won't be extinguished until they burn off all the oxygen. *You'll die if you stay here…*Audrey regurgitates the words the girl said, and suppresses that feeling that she's going to take a fatal step as she moves towards the finger of the mobile suit that's as thick as a tree branch.

The armor that has some of the machine's heat is hotter than expected. The left hand of the mobile suit is carrying 3 teenagers, and the machine gets up from a kneeling position. It slowly activates its thrusters, and the unit with the thruster pack behind slowly leaves the ground. *I just accepted protection from a Federation mobile suit*—Audrey's unable to consider the significance and weight of this action as she looks at the flames in front of her, moving further and further away.

Part 20[edit]

"I don't deny that you managed to build the Foundation in one generation, but times are changing."

On the other side of the door that's slightly ajar, the light of the sunset and his father's voice came from there. That sunset was as beautiful as rouge, a crimson red sunset that was like fresh blood. Yes, at that time, the Vist's mansion was still on the ground…Cardeas recalls that under that real sky, when they're basked under the real sun, his grandfather was sitting at the office in the west block of the building—the healthy and strong Syam Vist will often look outside the window with hesitant looks.

"No matter what you say, I don't intend to hand the <<Laplace Box>> over to the Federation. The Foundation will be doomed once we hand that thing out. You're to be the next head of this family, and yet you don't know that?"

Syam's steady voice has some anger in this. This is a dream. Cardeas, who realizes this, continues to listen to this quarrel between his grandfather and his father. He's standing outside the office, becoming one with the 18-year-old him who peeked in. His father, who hardly comes home, will often start arguing with his grandfather. At

that point, Cardeas had no interest in managing the Foundation at all, whole-heartedly thinking about how he's to get away from these. To Cardeas at that point, this was a problem he had to handle.

Once he graduated from high school, he didn't want to enter college. He wanted to go out and sightsee, to take care of himself, and roam around the way. He knew what he could do and what he couldn't do. Ever since young, he was forced to enter a prestigious boarding school, and was forced to walk down a paved path. He remembers his own frustrations and melancholy he had when he was young, and stood in front of the office of this grandfather he always respected. The reason why he chose to visit when his father was around was because he wanted to avoid the hassle of saying the same things twice, and also, his personality wished that he could handle this thing the elders couldn't handle. Unlike the overly-serious father of his, the seasoned but smart grandfather will definitely stand on his side. That's what Cardeas intended.

"What you said is outdated. The Foundation can still hang on even without the 'box'. Or rather, because of the box, the Foundation can't take a step forward."

"Whose view is that? The Immigration Council?"

"Mine, father. I can think too."

Father. Cardeas' impression was that this was the first and last time his father called his grandfather as such. The awareness that this is a dream becomes faint, and Cardeas listens to their conversation intently. His father and grandfather want to step past that line they can't get across. And even as family—no, it's because they're family—that they take the one step that has no turning back. Even though he was only an 18-year-old brat back then, he was scared as he felt this. The mansion that he lived in ever since young became chilly.

"During the past 20 years, I expanded the Foundation through my own means, and I am proud of my own results. But you think that this result is due to the 'box'…"

"I never said that. You have the awareness to grasp the idea of when the trend is going on, which is why I nominated you to be the next head. But even though running this Foundation requires such awareness, it can't be used as the premise to start things."

"As you so hoped, I continued to restrain myself in order to answer your wishes. So what in the world are you still hoping for? When are you going to hand that thing over to me…! Sleeping in that

uncomfortable freezer all day; do you intend to control the Foundation forever?"

"Once I find someone worthy enough to hand the 'box' over, I'll die immediately. However, that person's not you."

Even though it's just said in the spur of the moment, Cardeas knew that his grandfather said something decisive. After a short moment, his father's voice was trembling, "You're really straightforward there…"

"Then, our relationship as father and son is over. I'll use that 'box' you got accidentally to stabilize the Foundation, and I'll learn from your will to live and try my best to get what I need."

"You're already mentally prepared when you say this, are you?"

"Do you think I'm joking?"

"No…it's just that as a father, I hoped that you'll take action without talking. Or else you'll regret it."

Cardeas thought that the so-called words piercing the heart referred to such a thing. The despair was shown through words, bringing a cutting ability that would never be matched. It's not hard to imagine what the person who heard that will feel.

"…Even this me doesn't have just one person's expectations. The Foundation I and them look forward to is different from yours. Don't forget that."

Cardeas felt that his father said too much. Even though this was still the lowest level of arguing for the person involved, there was too much information revealed. It would be enough to just say the following sentence if he wanted to leave that place.

"You're really a lonely man."

With this, his father walked out of his grandfather's office. Cardeas, who was standing in front of the door, couldn't find a chance to hide and froze. His father was slightly shocked to see him, and then wordlessly passed by him. On the other side of the door, his grandfather's profile was looking over with the shadow of the sunset draped over, and those eyes of him seemed like they wanted to tell something. However, Cardeas didn't have the courage to enter the room. The door closed quickly, and the lone shadow in the sunset remained in Cardeas' stare.

At that time, if father said something—no, if he had just put his hand on my shoulder, if he had only shown even the tiniest bit of concern to his

son, future developments may have been different. Cardeas thought. However, his father remained silent, never met anyone at home even at night, and went back to work as if he was running away. He was doing this because he didn't want his wife to worry…or maybe not. His father was merely looking at himself, looking at his own pitiful state of being abandoned by his grandfather. In the end, this was all because of his father's limits as a man, and was the biggest reason why his grandfather never handed everything over to him.

Cardeas lost his strength to continue discussing about the future and went back to school. He heard of his father's death 3 months later. There wasn't anything suspicious, and he died because of an unfortunate car accident—that's what the police and the news reported. In fact, some people in the Vist Foundation knew that it wasn't the case, and of course, Cardeas was one of them.

Cardeas learnt later on that his father was instigated by some Federation government senators and bureaucrats that he had strong relationships with, and really intended to launch something like a coup to get the Foundation. 50 years passed since the Universal Century started, and the difference in wealth between the Earth residents and the spacenoids was obvious. The space migration plans had shown some clues of abandoning the residents, which will of course cause the spacenoids' dissatisfaction to increase. Spacenoids all over the place continue to demand for independence, and the Federation was fearful that the <<Laplace Box>> would land in their hands—especially the faction of the political philosopher Zeon Zum Deikun, who attracted the attention of the spacenoids by promoting Side-ism—and his father must have been swallowed by this huge monster called the Federation government when he was trying to develop the Foundation. He was trapped, unable to break away, and walked down the path of no return.

It's possible to make a huge commotion over his father's death, but the people that could do it chose to remain silent. They just viewed his father as someone who could convince his grandfather, and once they saw that his grandfather rejected his father cruelly, they didn't have any ability to continue negotiating. Cardeas hated those people who came to his father's funeral with vague expressions, and it may be a lot easier to hate his grandfather. However, Cardeas saw that his grandfather seemed to age a lot once his father died, and couldn't hate him at all. On the other hand, he couldn't forgive him easily; and so, he chose to keep his distance away from the family and carry out his own plan without permission. He was looking for strength that could crush a frozen heart and fight against the cruel world. In the end, the Earth Federation's army became a one-time stop for Cardeas.

Cardeas learnt there that for hardworking people, there are two categories to them. One is the kind that will do anything to gain recognition; and the other is the kind that will see whether he will accomplish things and got other people's recognition as a result. The former is about getting the praise of other people, and loses decisiveness in important situations. In contrast, the latter have their targets set in front, and won't be distracted by the situation in front of them or the conscience, and will not hesitate when making decisions.

If his father was the former, his grandfather was the latter. Leaving aside his own feelings for his own grandfather, Cardeas himself worked hard to be the latter. His father always aimed to get his grandfather's appraisal, and until the end, was his grandfather's tool. One could even say that he was forever a kid. *One shouldn't be walking down the same path as this world isn't so caring to kids, let alone let them live on as kids. He has to work hard for his own sake and not look for others to repay him; and he should remember this heartily and do what he had to do. If he couldn't be completely independent, an end where he would be discarded once he's used would be waiting for him. If that really happened, he would be vengeful over being unable to feel love and praise, and will continue to curse the world before dying.*

To be a man. This belief cause the 18-year-old youth to shed his appearance as a teenager as he faced the dry outside world. After more than 10 years, Cardeas became someone suitable in his grandfather's eyes, and at this point, he returned back to the Vist Foundation. The 30 years that passed next was really fast, like instant. He lost a lot of things, and there were a lot of things he couldn't protect. But even if others don't know this, he did.

Perhaps this way of living is really lonely, perhaps life's just a game of bluff. Cardeas, who used his own body to take the bullet from a relative of his—and the closest one at that, proved that he was just a member of a cursed family, and thought coldly in heart. *Was grandfather's careless for letting father betray him? Is it because he lacked a heart to think for the weak that he demanded so much from himself? Or he had to use this forced view to protect himself? If he didn't do so, he will be crushed. From that viewpoint, that will make him a delicate and weak person.*

That's why he dreamt. He dreamt of finding someone he could hand the <<Laplace Box>> over to and hoped to get back the promised future. He harbored such a naïve thought and bet his entire life on it. And he asked me, who's walking down the same path as me: Can you forgive me?

Was that really Syam Vist who would never look for other people's appraisal? However, Cardeas, who's about to meet his end, will soon experience the dissatisfaction of life. Humans will give birth and entrust their funerals to their children. His grandfather, who had to endure the greatest pain of killing his own son and yet get the recognition from his grandson, should be a happy man.

But I have nothing. A relative to ask for forgiveness, someone who can redeem me, someone who I can entrust…I have nothing. I'm lonely. Cardeas thought. *Lonely, helplessly lonely…*

The words that were said subconsciously came out from the hole in his abdomen, forming a trail of blood floating in zero gravity. Cardeas feels that the heat on his burning skin is becoming weaker, and groggily awakes to see fire in his sights.

All the refinery plants were burned, and the fire cause the inner walls of the factory to become rouge in color. That light was similar to the sunset he saw in his dream. This rouge light that seemed to burn all of the family's works, including his father and grandfather's, blackens the inside of the <<Magallanica>>, swallowing the mobile suits' remains lying in the fire and burning everything to dust.

His own body will soon become one of the floating objects and get swallowed by the fire. Cardeas already lost a lot of blood ever since he was shot in the command console room and got here, and can be said to be dying. Soon after, this slightly dormant fire will likely burn even wilder, but there's something he has to do. Cardeas uses his numb leg to kick the wall and fly to the safety area of the container deck.

He leans on the airlock and uses his blood-stained hand to press on the palmprint identification panel and look at the iris recognition installation to unlock the door, which in turns swings open. From the way things operate normally, the special forces probably haven't found this way, but this means that Gael didn't manage to destroy the classified stuff. Cardeas feels a pain in his heart that's different from the one on his own body. *Gael didn't manage to make it here…*

In that case, I can only do it myself. Cardeas pass through the airlock and enter the safety area in front of the gas chamber. In this large and completely sealed space, the unharmed white body of that <<Unicorn>> enters his eyes.

This mobile suit is created out of the Universal Century plan, which in turn is part of the Federation's reorganization plan, and it bears the mission of being the guide to the <<Laplace Box>>. Cardeas use his

hand to wipe his somewhat blurry eyes as he look at the machine that symbolizes the beast of possibilities. At this moment, he notices a stinging stench and frowns. It wasn't an imagination as this safety area is really becoming smoky. There's a hole in a certain corner in the next room, causing the smoke from the factory to enter here. Cardeas looks around, sees that it's getting smokier, realizes it's a bad sign, and leaps up to the pilot seat of the <<Unicorn>>.

Since there's an access point, it's not weird for the Special Forces to be here anytime. He has to erase the Laplace OS script on the machine and also try as much as possible to destroy anything related to NT-D here. Cardeas is really hurt by the fact that he has to destroy this thing without it being used once, but he can't let the key to opening the <<Laplace Box>> enter the Federation government's hands. Cardeas look up at the corner with the NT-D sensor, and then looks at the cockpit at the abdomen. The sound of something breaking can be heard behind him, and a hot gust of wind that blows over covers him.

They're flames coming from the airlock. The flames climb up the wall, melting the metal frames, and Cardeas, who's slammed to the wall, sees the debris that's spewing out. He bites his lower lip, feeling regret instead of fear. He hasn't dealt with the secrets of the <<Unicorn>>, yet the long-cherished wish of the family is going to be exposed as he dies off.

He has no kin he can ask for forgiveness, and has no god that he can pray for help. He will only be burned to death with anger and regret—Cardeas watches the debris flying over and wants to curse out loud, but at this moment, something seem to knock into him from the side and send him flying.

His body's slammed aside into the wall, and he's then pulled back to the container area with the <<Unicorn>>. Cardeas watches the surging flames below his feet, and his body embraces the impact of the debris that's stabbed into the wall. At this moment, he touches the arms that are grabbing him from behind, and once inside the container area, the arm releases itself. The arms release once they enter a corner of the container, and a hand moves in front and grabs Cardeas' hand tightly. That person kicks the wall on the container, and Cardeas moves over to the cockpit of the <<Unicorn>>. Cardeas notices the side of that person's face and feels that his hand is losing strength.

"PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!"

Banagher Links yells as he grabs the hand that's about to be released. Is this a dream? After blinking a while, Cardeas grabs Banagher's hand again and checks the touch of that youthful skin. *It's good even if*

it's a dream. He thought. If he can dream in the end, there's still value in his life. To think that he, who's hurt by his own kin, will be saved by 'another'…

However, the sensation of reality becomes stronger as he approaches the cockpit of the <<Unicorn>>. The dream like feeling starts to fade, and the pain in the abdomen doesn't seem to ease up. Cardeas looks again at the face in front of him, and Banagher looks back for a bit before looking away again. He puts Cardeas on the linear seat, and he stands at the door of the cockpit, his back facing the light as he looks over at Cardeas.

His face is really like his mother's, and the ash tea-colored eyes seem to look rather stubborn. That's right, it's Banagher, Anna Links' child. The scar has already remained in his heart, yet he never has the chance to look back at the tumor in his life. Right now, 'she' suddenly appears. The face that shows Cardeas how deceitful he has been is right in front of him.

"It's you…"

It doesn't matter why things ended up like this. Cardeas smiles as he looks at this kin of his who seemed to appear miraculously. Banagher remains silent and looks over with a wary and bothered look. Behind him, flames that are being created by the explosions start to dance and light his profile. It looks like a rouge-colored sunset is shining into the cockpit.

Part 21[edit]

The flames that blow aside the airlock is rising up from the floor to the ceiling, and the handling port is burning. Banagher feels the heat flowing on his back and stares at the man sitting on the linear seat.

It's Cardeas Vist. His face that's covered with ash look rather sick, and there's blood seeping out from his abdomen due to the breathing. However, the sharp expression on his face never changes. That's really the owner of the Vist Foundation that has tremendous influence in the financial world, the owner of the 'Snail' Audrey wished to see, and the arrogant man who viewed him like a stray dog. And most likely, he's the reason why this meaningless war began—

It's been more than 20 minutes since the wireless communicator was cut off with the sound of gunshots, and Banagher still can't find any normal suits for use. He activated the display monitor to check the map of the 'Snail', and this face appeared in front of him. Banagher knows that he has a lot of questions he has to ask, and he knows that it's of

utmost priority to treat someone who's hurt, but he can't move his own limbs freely. It's not the stench of blood that prevents him from going near Cardeas, but those eyes. As Banagher grabbed that body that was almost swallowed by flames and brought him to the cockpit, those eyes were still staring at him. The eyes are so sharp and yet so moist, causing Banagher to remain there.

There's no sense of thanksgiving or bewilderment in his eyes. One gets the feeling that he's looking down on others, but there's a hidden serenity in his eyes. *Why?* Banagher mutters in his heart. *This is really uncomfortable. Why are you looking at me like that…?*

"Why are you here?"

About several seconds later, Cardeas speaks up. This voice is different from the voice Banagher heard in the villa, and it seem that he's a changed man. He is speechless.

"Why, you ask…where's Audrey?"

Since he has to respond, Banagher says out the question he wanted to ask most. Cardeas seem to be surprised as he twitches his eyebrows and asks, "You came here for her?" Banagher grips his fists and whispers softly again, "Where is she?"

"…I don't know, but she's definitely alive. She has escaped death countless times ever since she was born."

"So even you don't know…"

What kind of answer is this. Banagher thinks, but Cardeas, who starts to cough as he looks down, doesn't say anything else. Banagher feels that his feet floating in zero gravity is being unstable. *Then, this guy left Audrey behind and ran off alone? He's letting other people die and intends to use this mobile suit to escape?*

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING!!?"

Banagher shouts so loudly that even he's surprised by this, and this voice echoes through the cramped cockpit. Cardeas lifts his head slightly.

"Saying such so-called impressive words and yet unable to do anything. Audrey came to meet you so that she could stop the war! How many people do you think have died!? Everyone was still living alright just now. They still had things they wanted to do tomorrow or the next week. But…but then, how can people die just like that!?"

Cardeas wordlessly narrows his eyes and mutters, "How can…people,

die like this?” Banagher doesn’t seem to realize what he’s saying and yells, “ISN’T IT!?”

“People have ways to live and die that only belong to humans. How can they just die so stupidly in war, burned to death, bleed to death…a war that cost half of humanity; WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU ADULTS THINKING!?”

The feelings Banagher can’t vent out fully reach his fingertips, and he leans over at Cardeas. Banagher grabs onto the display monitor to try and adjust his posture, but Cardeas grabs onto his shoulder first.

“…Do you still remember?”

The eyes in front of him seem to be probing for something as they give off a sharp tinge. Banagher, who’s being stared at, forgets to push off the hand on his shoulder and frowns.

“Through the possibilities within, humanity’s power and kindness is shown to the world…to the humans who devoured the Earth and are looking for an exit in space, this is a duty we have to do. Or rather, this is our hope…”

Cardeas looks over at the all-view monitor that isn’t showing anything. Banagher feels something heavy pulsating in his forehead, causing his shoulder with the hand on it to jerk. He hurriedly shakes off Cardeas’ hand, retreats to the cockpit door and leans his back on the wall.

I know this. I never heard of this, yet I know. The words hidden in my mind that has been repeating themselves ever since the war started—

“You’re asking what we want to do…that’s not the case. We never did anything. We have the power to resist this monster called the Federation, and for 100 years, we wanted to use it to resist it…but unknowingly, we ourselves became monsters. So…”

The surrounding explosions and tremors that ring stop Cardeas from continuing, Banagher hurriedly covers Cardeas and uses his back to block the storm that’s blown into the cockpit.

The loud rumbling sound of the metal collapsing rings, and the gateway to the handling port is gradually wrecked by the pressure outside. Hot air again blows in from the cracks. The outside flashes 2, 3 times, and they can hear the same number of explosions as the flashes. This is the sound of the mega-particle cannons. Mobile suits are fighting again. Banagher sees that what looks like a mobile suit with 4 wings is shooting out blueish-white thruster jets and flying through. He puts his hand behind Cardeas’ neck and tries to pull him

up from the linear seat. Cardeas can't help but moan, perhaps because the wound's touched. Banagher again carries Cardeas and simply says, "Let's get out of here."

"Pull yourself together. We can't grumble if we're shot when we ride this."

It's zero gravity, but it's rather tough having to move a person. Banagher's feet step on a side of the all-view monitor and intends to carry Cardeas' large body. "Wait." A commanding tone that doesn't allow for any rebuttals causes Banagher to stop.

"You came here to save 'her', right…is your heart still the same?"

It's another probing expression again. Banagher hears his heart beating clearly and loudly.

"The burden 'she's bearing is very heavy…since you decide to help her, that means you have to bear some of this burden. Is this fine with you?"

It's not merely a feeling. Cardeas' hand on his shoulder is becoming heavier. Banagher is somewhat stunned and instinctively asks, "Now's not the time to talk about this, right!?"

"I have to find her. Takuya and Micott are still here."

That's why you're leading the way. Before he can say this, Banagher sees Cardeas' expression, and can't help but gasp.

The bloodied lips are curling up, and a smiling face is right in front of Banagher. It's not a wry smile nor a mocking smile, but a satisfied smile that's mixed with pride and some sadness—*why?*. Cardeas moves his arm before Banagher can react, and pushes him onto the linear seat.

"Take this and go."

He puts the display monitor back to its original position and puts Banagher's hands on the control sticks on both left and right side. The chilliness of his hand causes Banagher to tremble a bit and ask in a puzzled manner, "Wha, what is it…?" Cardeas doesn't look at Banagher as he says sternly, "Don't move." He then works on the touch-screen keyboard on the display, and puts his hand on it.

The palmprint identification light flashes, and the words access authorized is shown on the screen. Cardeas moves out of the cockpit, and the all-view screen lets out a green light. A strong light that's flashing like a laser appears in front of Banagher's eyes. The light that

forms a screen inside the inner wall of the ball-shaped object moves from right to left and up to down, scanning throughout the whole cockpit, displaying the data collected on the monitor. A 3D CG silhouette shows someone sitting on the linear seat, and the light screen scans this silhouette before disappearing again.

The word ‘complete’ appears on the monitor and continues to blink. Banagher finally manages to ask “What are you doing…”, and Cardeas ignores Banagher’s doubts as he returns back into the cockpit. He works on the touchscreen keyboard, and the high-pitched sound of the engine being activated rings, causing the cockpit to jerk lightly.

A reserve power supply isn’t enough for such an action, so this reaction—is the thermonuclear reactor core, the main generator being activated. The screen that forms the all-view monitor starts to activate, covering the two of them through a 360 degrees view without any openings. All sorts of system check windows are closing one after another, and the noise of the generator starts to get louder and louder. Banagher finally understands the meaning of the words ‘take this away’, and hurriedly lets go of the control sticks.

His heart is beating, and the sweat continues to flow under his armpits. Banager is speechless and can only look at Cardeas with a bewildered expression. “That’s good…” Cardeas says silently.

“The <<Unicorn>> will only listen to you now. If it feels that you’re a rider that suits it, it will give you unsurpassed power, and the door leading to the <<Laplace Box>> will most likely open.”

“What are you saying? I don’t understand. What’s this <<Laplace Box>>…”

Banagher feels that his head is all messed up and about to explode, and wants to hurry up and get off the linear seat, but is held down by Cardeas’ hand pressing on his chest. “You should be able to understand.” The deep voice passes through Banagher, robbing him the strength to resist.

“The curse has bound our Vist Foundation for 100 years…but if we can use this curse well, we’ll bring about a bright future to the Universal Century.”

It seems that another explosion happened beside the feet of the machine, and the gust that strikes blows the silver hair on Cardeas forehead. Banagher looks back at the eyes that seem to be trying to say something so important that even words can’t express them, and feels that something in his forehead is breaking open.

“Bound…curse?”

I don’t know what he’s saying…no, I understand. The curse bound on the Vist family…yes, because of this, mom—

“Anna…your mother, hates to be bound by this curse, and disappeared in front of me.”

My head’s dizzy. My body’s shaking. I don’t want to hear. I don’t want to know. Don’t say it! Banagher yells. *Why at this time? This isn’t something that you should be randomly saying in a casual tone!*

“I suppose Anna hates me, and so do you. I can’t do anything for you two, and even pushed this burden onto you…but now, we can only accept this coincidence.”

“What are you…trying to say…”

The pulsating spreads from his forehead to his temples, and each pulsating causes his memories to become clearer. The tapestry in the Vist villa…the resounding piano tune in the wide room…the pianist was his mother. His mother was facing the piano and playing a clear tone. A voice can be heard with the sound, and wide arms are carrying him. The finger is pointing to a tapestry on the wall, the gentle voice is something that’s hard to understand seriously, and the face in his sights was—

The explosion that rings nearby interrupts Banagher’s thoughts. He recovers and hears that man, who’s right in front of him now, say, “Go, Banagher.”

“Do not fear. Believe in yourself. Believe in the possibilities you have. As long as you believe and try your best, a path will naturally open up for you. Go do what you feel you have to do!”

After saying that, Cardeas leans down and starts to cough. His arm is losing strength, and the arms that were extremely strong and sturdy before are now so weak and so unreliable, as they use up the last of their strength. Banagher sees the blood blobs floating out from the drooping head, and grabs onto Cardeas’ hand with an emotion even he doesn’t understand.

“You want me to believe in myself…isn’t that too selfish of you to say that now!? What do you know about me!?”

You never even attended mom’s funeral. You called me here, and never even come over to meet me. Banagher feels the emotions in his heart start to melt, and holds back the heat rising up his throat, not letting go of Cardeas’ hand like he’s relying on him. “I understand.”

This strong voice causes Banagher's voice to jerk.

"I…understood, everything…and right now, I'm very happy."

Cardeas smiles slightly and uses that empty hand of his to stroke Banagher's face. That hand seems to have no blood in it as it feels icy cold, but the movement's so gentle. The fingers seem like they're trying to pass over the little warmth left in the body, and the irreplaceable touch resonates with the heat inside Banagher's heart.

Banagher gathers the surging emotions into words, but before he can speak up, the fingers touching his face shuts his mouth. The icy cold hand is released from Cardeas, and his tall and large body floats out of the cockpit.

"I hope you can forgive me of my selfishness…I still, want, to be, with you…"

Cardeas floats out of the cockpit, and is moving further and further away. *He's going. There're a lot of things I want to ask him, to talk to him about, but he's going away now.* Banagher forces himself off the

linear seat and wants to rush out of the cockpit too. However, the flames that come from the side surround Cardeas' body, and the hot debris smash that profile to smithereens.

"DAD!!" The voice is blocked off by the cockpit that suddenly closes, and the empty echo rings inside it. The machine's self-defense system detects the heat and the storm of this danger area and closes the door. Right now, there's no gap in that panel that form the all-view monitor. Banagher, who's clutching at the cockpit door, looks for Cardeas' profile on the all-view monitor. From the field of vision of the 20m tall mobile suit, all he can see is a sea of flames, and the gate at the front is half-wrecked. There's no signs of Cardeas, only countless falling sparks landing on the all-view screen, leaving a few remains of thin light on the hi-definition monitor.

"Dad…did I just say dad…?"

The emotions that swell in Banagher form words that comes out, and they were unable to be released as Cardeas covered his mouth—it's like saying that he himself didn't have the right to be called that. Banagher sits on the linear seat and uses both hands to press onto his temples that are in sharp pain. *That's a lie. Something must be wrong somewhere.* But no matter how many times he repeats this to himself, the surging sharp pain in him never vanishes as the pulse expands and contracts, telling him that this is the truth. The seal of his memories are released…no, it's because the seal wasn't complete that he just felt 'disjointed' all this while. The knowledge, decision making and responsiveness that was ingrained into him when he was young was how he managed to get himself to move, and managed to live till now. Perhaps he has unknowingly wished for such a thing to happen when his mother passed away and when he accepted his dad's invitation.

Hope? Did I hope for this? He grips his hands holding onto the temples and opens his eyes. He sees that there's a drink straw beside him amongst the floating blood. This is something he found in the survival vest when he rummaged through the spare supplies.

I should have let him drink it. This thought appears in his mind, and the block of suppressed emotions inside his heart is melted immediately. Banagher senses that his vision is blurry. He lost so much blood, and must be thirsty. I wanted to let him drink it after he finished talking—

"Why…am I crying…"

He wipes his eyes again, but tears continue to swell out. The transparent water form beads that float in the air with the blood. He's

not sad about the death of his dad, or what may be his dad, but that he didn't' manage to let him take a drink, and he's so sad that he doesn't even realize it. However, no matter how much he regret it, what's gone is gone, can't be taken back, and there's no second chance. The entire reality of this is so painful, sad and infuriating.

How many people—have their second chances simply robbed just like that? Banagher looks at the front, passes through the collapsed remains of the gate, and can see the thruster jet lights of the mobile suit with four wings and continuous explosions. In the midst of the fire, it continues to leap towards the next target like a monster. However, that machine doesn't have the decision making ability of a death god, just scattering death randomly without order. This ugly machine has mercilessly crushed many lives that aren't long enough, that want to do a lot of things that they want to do, that want to pass their messages to others.

That kind of death isn't one that belongs to humans, and I have to eliminate it. Such a thought appears in Banagher's mind, and he grips onto the control joysticks on both left and right sides. *Is this something decided out of my own will, or that the knowledge ingrained in me that tell me to do so?* His palms feel the rumbling of the engines, and just when he's feeling slightly uncomfortable, a familiar girl's voice suddenly flashes through his mind.

(YOU CAN'T DO THAT! MARIDA!)

It's not a voice, but an unknown thing that can only be described as a voice appears as a flash past his forehead. Banagher hurriedly grips onto the control joysticks. 'She's in the place the 4-winged machine is going to. 'She's in danger, and even in danger, her thoughts are still calm. Banagher doesn't think about why he understands this. *The machine's controls are basically similar to a mini-mobile suit. I can do this.* Banagher looks at the display monitor, makes the minimum level of checking, and becomes a part of the machine his dad handed him.

The mobile suit called the <<Unicorn>> moves its body that's being restrained and lifts its head. The optical sensors hidden under the visor are glowing, looking like eyes as they look forward.

Part 22[edit]

(YOU CAN'T DO THAT, MARIDA!)

He doesn't spend too much effort listening to the cry from the wireless communicator—the girl's voice. Riddhe sees the 4-winged enemy unit activate its thrusters and rush in from behind, mentally prepared to be

taken down.

At this moment, they just move through the partition of the construction block and are entering the port area. The <<ReZEL>>'s body can't turn in time to use its 60mm Vulcan guns to suppress. The beam rifle can be used, but there are 3 civilians on the left mechanical arm, causing Riddhe to hesitate.

If he uses the rifle, the enemy unit will use a beam weapon too, and the <<ReZEL>> will be caught in a tough battle. There's the option of sacrificing the three civilians in his hand and try to resist hard if he's going to be taken down, but Riddhe doesn't have the courage to do this immediately, and just when he's thinking if there's any other methods, the time used to think becomes a fatal delay as the mobile suit with four wings close in.

The mono-eye on the 4-winged suit flashes, and a beam saber handle is pulled out from the sleeve with the Neo Zeon insignia on it. He's already about to reach the docking bay. He can at least counterattack once he lets the civilians land on the <<Nahel Argama>>. *I'll die.* This premonition causes Riddhe's hairs to stand as he screams. He looks at the enemy suit behind him, yells out, and prays that his embarrassing scream isn't heard by anyone else.

Suddenly, a pulsating feeling happens in the air of the industrial area, and time stops.

There's a pulse…or rather, a rhythmic force blows by the cockpit, moving through the body from the back. Riddhe feels that his hair and scalp under the helmet is being dragged together by the pulse moving forward. He forgets about the situation and looks at the Industrial block. The machine that stopped beside it, the 4-winged mobile suit looks behind—deep inside the refinery plant that's being surrounded by fire. The source of the wave is tremble, and its 'eyes' seem to be looking at him.

(Banagher…!?)

Riddhe hears the girl's voice again and looks forward. At a corner of the all-view monitor, the brown-haired girl amongst the 3 civilians that were rescued gets up from the palm of the <<ReZEL>> and looks over at the profile in the refinery plant. Unlike the other two people who's holding onto the index and middle fingers of the <<ReZEL>>, she uses the thumb to get up. The gust of wind blows her hair and jacket. She looks at the pulse that's formed in a corner of the industrial area, and though her eyes are wide due to shock, her expression is showing such strength that won't back down.

So pretty. Riddhe mutters, and with this, he regains his sanity somewhat. He steps on the pedal and moves the control joystick to the left. The <<ReZEL>> that grazes past the airtight wall activates its thrusters, accelerating and twisting its body. The thrust jets shoot out, and the <<ReZEL>> leaves the ground and slides into the partition wall of the dock that has a hole about 10m big.

It pulls its distance from the 4-winged mobile suit and reaches the dark port area which isn't affected by battle yet. Riddhe takes a slight breath and looks over at the Industrial block through the hole. Deep inside the refinery plant that has become a furnace, there's a glow that's different from the flames. It's like the killing intent hasn't subside yet as Riddhe has an ominous vibe.

Something's about to be awakened. This intuition that lacks a clear subject causes him to feel goosebumps.

Part 23[edit]

At first, that thing just looks like it's just dangling at the half-collapsed partition.

The white armor is kept in the cage like a casket, and the humanoid machine that's being burned by the flames. Its hands suddenly use strength, and the metal rings restraining the hands start to creak. The gap at the wrists armor lets out a light red glow, appearing like blood vessels. And then, the metal rings that are unable to bear the burden, are pulled up with the fixation, and the giant that slowly gets up clenches its fist.

Its upper body tilts forward and continues to exert strength. The restraints on the arms bounce off, and the light coming out from the gaps in the armor becomes stronger. The light looks like some geometrical pattern of a substrate circuit as it expand throughout the entire body like a pulse, making one feel that the giant's bones under the white skin—the movable frame that forms the unit is glowing. As the last metal rings on the left and right arms bounce off, the upper body leaves the cage, and the giant's eyes glows. The metal cables are ripped one by one, and the giant's body tilts further forward as the metal rings restraining the left knee and ankle are pulled out.

Then, the restrains on the right foot are pulled out, and the giant that regains its freedom leaves its cage as it falls forward. The giant crushes the narrow catwalk as it uses both hands to support itself on the ground. It lifts its head with the horn, and through the crack in the partition, looks outside. Its eyes again lights up through the visor, and it finds another giant on the other side of the fire—<<Kshatriya>>.

“Where did the machine come from…?”

She stops chasing the enemy unit and lands on the burning Industrial block. Marida faces the machine and feels a chill throughout her entire body.

The appearance is based on the traditional design of the Federation army’s units. However, the eyes that are copied from humans are giving off killing intent. Marida feels that this guy is too dangerous, and she has to destroy it first—no matter who the pilot is, she has to eliminate it before it completely awakes. Marida isn’t distracted anymore as she doesn’t bother sensing the other enemies and ‘her’ weak voice as she views this white machine in front of her as an enemy. The psycommu cause the funnels to shoot out, and the units gather together to attack the white mobile suit.

3, 4 lines of mega-particles cross each other, destroying the partition that’s about to collapse. The flames of the explosion expand, and the giant vanish inside the flames without being able to get up. Continuous explosions then occur, and the fireball swallows the cage behind it as the sealed room that contains the giant is reduced to rubble. Marida, who believes that she just made a direct hit, sees two glowing eyes in the flames.

“Wha…!?”

She can’t dodge in time. The white machine glides through the vortex of black smoke, carrying its explosive thrusters that shoot out jet lights as it moves forward. The enemy knocks down the refinery plant and immediately closes in for about 300m. Marida immediately pulls out her beam saber, and the hi-heat particles let out a light stronger than the surrounding flames as the <<Kshatriya>> waves its right arm. But just as the beam blade’s about to touch the enemy unit. A hand grabs onto the <<Kshatriya>>’s right hand. Marida sees a horn rush into her clutches, but the left arm she instinctively raised is being held down from above. The <<Kshatriya>> raises the beam saber and clashes with the white mobile suit.

The white mobile suit hooks its feet onto the ground, and the tightly grounded feet of the white mobile suit let out a glow through the visor. It’s scrumming straight on with the <<Kshatriya>> that’s of the same height but twice as heavy, and the delicate machine lets out a sound of metal rolling. The glow coming from between the gaps of the armor is shining like a pulse as they sway with the hot air. Marida feels that she can’t move her control panel and is terrified. She’s giving the maximum output, but she’s being forced back. The arms that control the large number of binders let out a cry, and the actuators indicate an overload

signal.

“The <<Kshatriya>>’s losing in power output…!?”

Impossible. Such a thought became anger. The psycommu installation that senses this activates its mechanical arm. The binders that look like wings reach out its insect leg-like hidden arm, and the front tip shoots out the beam saber as it tries to stab through the white mobile suit. Marida aims for the cockpit at the abdomen, and yet feels an impact from behind and screams.

The main thrusters of the white machine shoot out its lights, pushing itself forward with the <<Kshatriya>>. The frame of the <<Kshatriya>> hits the burning refinery plant and is pressed into the fire by the white mobile suit. Marida’s head enters the safety airbags that eject out from the console. She immediately gets up, but sees that the partition is closing in behind her, and is stunned. It’ll be trouble once she crashes into the partition. In the midst of the tremors, she shouts out in what’s like a scream, “FUNNELS!”

Numerous <<Funnels>> fly out from the cockpit and shoot particle beams at the partition. The two mobile suits that are tussling with each other crash through the melted partition and into the airlock. They immediately break into the airtight area that’s less than 100m wide, and the back is already a partition separating the airtight area from the port. The <<Funnels>> shoot out beams again, and the two machines break through the smoke from the explosion and enter the port.

They knock aside the containers that are parked there and topple the cranes that are used for transport. The <<Kshatriya>>’s being held down by the white mobile suit as it glides in the air. From below, she can see the Federation ship that entered the dock and the countless mobile suits that’s standing on the white ship. However, Marida doesn’t have the mind to care about that. The machine’s unable to move freely due to the wind pressure. Marida wants to use the psycommu to shoot the white machine from behind, but because of a malfunction in the psycommu, the accuracy dropped, and she realizes that she’s being forced back; forced back by the unfathomable arm strength of this white mobile suit, by the killing intent inside the machine, and the burning consciousness of the pilot—

(GET OUT OF HERE—!!)

The voice of the pilot can be heard through the contact loop. It’s a boy’s voice. Marida’s mind instinctively tells her that she heard of this voice before, and the last partition is already right behind her.

The <<Funnels>> shoot out beams, creating a hole in the partition. The strong gust of wind cover the machine as explosions and howls of wind can be heard. Then, there's complete silence inside the cockpit. They arrived at vacuum—where space is. The inner wall of the docking bay is gradually further, and the all-view monitor shows a dark space where the moon is floating at. The air pressure on the machine is gone, and Marida controls the thrusters like she's launching and leaves the white mobile suit.

The <<Kshatriya>> spins once more in the vacuum and gets behind the white mobile suit. The white mobile suit lets out its thrusters and again rushes at her. Marida is amazed by the high mobility as she dodges with the bare minimum movement. She heaves a sigh of relief. Though there's overwhelming power, its movements are too simply, and the enemy pilot seem to be no different from a rookie.

Also, it seems that the enemy isn't equipped with armaments. *I can win this* Marida dodges the second attack and looks at the trajectory of the white mobile suit, and then at the hole in the colony builder's docking bay that's like a snail shell. The Federation's transformable mobile suits are about to head outside. They're not hard to deal with, but it won't be good if they team up with the white mobile suit. Since the Federation ship has docked, she can't head to the colony builder to look for 'her'. *It's over.* The bitter feeling rises in her.

I couldn't save the princess, and I have to retreat while uncertain of master's location. Marida dodges the white mobile suit that came over, moves above it and gathers her anger and anxiety on the enemy unit in front of her. The pilot's a rookie, but it knocked her out, and she can't forgive it,

"I will at least take you down…!"

She doesn't want to waste time. The <<Kshatriya>> folds its arms, and the binders spread out. She release all the <<Funnels>> she can still use, and 20 <<Funnels>> fly out in a vortex at the white mobile suit.

The chance to surround it will come when it brakes suddenly and turns. The <<Funnels>> scatter and surround the white mobile suit in a 'sphere array' as they form a diameter of at least 100m. the cannons gather light from the mega-particle cannons, aiming for the core in the center—

Part 24[edit]

Even as the physical sensors ring, Banagher can't see anything, and the radar doesn't detect anything. However, he feels an intense killing

intent surrounding him.

The killing intent is gathered all around like sharp needles, and there's nowhere to dodge. No matter how he moves, he will be hit by the killer needles coming in all directions. Even the <<Unicorn>> that's so nimble and agile like human limbs can't escape this cage of killing intent.

I'll be killed. I'll be killed without even doing anything. The still relatively sane parts in his mind is calling out, and his body is trembling with an unknown impulse controlling him. Immediately, (Believe) a voice appears in Banagher's forehead, appearing as a light flash in front of the eyes.

At the same time, the sound of metal clashing with each other echo in the cockpit, and the all-view monitor that shows the CG space let out a glow. It's not that the monitor is glowing, but that the components of the cockpit themselves are glowing. There's a luminescent light glowing from the gaps between the monitor, and it can hardly be called red or green. The display console immediately flashes the words <<NT-D>>, and the fixate equipped on the chair rest moves on its own as it clamps onto Banagher's head on both left and right side. Everything then began.

The parts forming the shoulders of the <<Unicorn>> break open from the gaps in the armor, and the sliding armor reveal a frame that's giving off red light. The same phenomenon happens with the legs, knees and thigh. The front armor of the waist and the torso open up as well, causing the <<Unicorn>> to look bigger. The red luminescent glow is becoming stronger, causing the bright patterns decorating the white mobile suit to become clearer.

The wrists are sliding too, and two beam saber handles appear at the back of it, hanging on the shoulders like a decoration. The one change that's most obvious however is the head. The part that's like a mask opens, and the visor on the complex eye slide off, causing the <<Unicorn>>'s face to look completely different. The one horn that's represent the unit splits in half and shows a V-shape, showing a third eye on the part covered by the horn—the main camera. The two cameras that are positioned like human eyes glow, and the unit that has a golden V-shaped horn on its forehead is just like…

Part 25[edit]

(Did you say <<Gundam>>?)

This voice can be heard through the exchanging voices in the wireless communicator, causing Audrey to widen her eyes in shock.

She grabs onto the mobile handle and looks up to see the speaker in the ship's passage. And then "IT'S TRUE!" another voice calls out. Audrey has an impression on this other voice. *It's the Federation pilot who sent us here to this ship and flew off.*She remembers the mechanical officer called him Riddhe.

"That unknown unit is changing…no, transforming! It's becoming a <<Gundam>> right in front of my eyes!"

"Bridge here. I've confirmed it. It really looks like a <<Gundam>>-type. It's fighting against the enemy unit now. It's really fast. I can't catch up."

The voice that echoes next is a lot calmer than Ensign Riddhe.

“<<Gundam>>?” “For real…?” The people beside her spoke up. They’re the boy and girl who entered the ship with her—Audrey suddenly remembers that she hasn’t asked them about their names. The mechanical officer who landed on the upper deck in a spacesuit told them to head to the standby room, and they entered the ship without anyone leading them. They went in, asking directions from the crew that’s moving about with killing intent, and move through the passengers. There was no time to ask each other what their names are, and she doesn’t have the chance to ask them why they’re holding onto Banagher’s Haro and why they’re entering the colony builder.

At this moment, they hear a word <<Gundam>>. Audrey looks at the reaction of the boy and girl walking in front of her. The boy lets go of the mobile handrail and gets near the communication console that’s built on the wall. The girl catches the Haro he tosses aside and shouts, “What are you doing?” But the boy operates on the console and switches the images on the monitor.

“I’m looking outside. If the server line’s linked, we should be able to see the image captured by the camera outside the ‘Snail’, right?”

“You’ll get scolded for messing with this.”

“That’s a <<Gundam>>, you know. You heard of it, right? The first mobile suit the Federation army developed. It destroyed more than 100 Zeon mobile suits, and is called the <<White Devil>>…it’s here!”

The boy’s excited voice causes Audrey to look at the 10cm wide screen. The image is showing a pitch black outer space that is only optically corrected, and nothing else. The boy changes the channel, and the rough space image changes as he immediately sees what looks like a beam rifle shot. After that, the white ring that immediately explosions light the profile of the mobile suit in front of it.

The profile is completely humanoid, and the obvious-looking V-shaped blade of the antenna is on the forehead. That’s right. It’s a <<Gundam>>-type mobile suit. “You saw it?” “How would I know?” Audrey hears the conversation between the boy and the girl as she feels goosebumps all over her.

During the One Year War, the <<White Devil>> caused her own country to be in a difficult situation, and after that, mobile suits of the same name were developed, becoming famous in many battles. This is undoubtedly one of them, a new model <<Gundam>> that incorporates current technology. However, Audrey knows that its existence isn’t that simple. This <<Gundam>> that’s wearing the skin of the legendary beast has the secret that rocks the world. As Cardeas

said, this machine is the beacon leading to <<Laplace Box>>, or the key. And now, it's awakening—

"Unicorn…Gundam."

The grand plan Audrey heard of several hours ago cause her head to heat up as she seem to be daydreaming as she said this name. The boy and the girl turn around to look at her in surprise, but she's not concerned about trying to hide herself now as she stares at this small screen, her eyes continuing to catch up to that white machine.

Part 26[edit]

The lone horn on the white mobile suit splits aside and becomes a mobile suit in another state. The pilot Marida doesn't think about why this happens as she accepts this fact in front of her and continues to fight. However, she can only see that shape for an instant.

"It disappeared again…!?"

The beams clash with each other from all directions in three dimensions, creating an explosion that scatters in the vacuum. The enemy mobile suit isn't there anymore. It vanishes. The white mobile suit has escaped from the sphere array formed by the 20 funnels and moved several kilometers away. The eyes under V-shaped horn flash a dark glow. The entire body lets out a luminescent afterimage, causing the <<Gundam>> to look like it's giving off a fighting will.

It's not exactly a joke such that it did a teleport. It just moved away at high speed, but it immediately accelerated and stopped, causing its movements to look like it disappeared. It's impossible to detect the presence, let alone to try and catch up with the eyes.

"If it's not a Cyber-Newtype, with that kind of acceleration…!"

How can the pilot handle this? Marida doesn't notice that she said a taboo word as she just focuses on detecting the enemy's presence. The funnels that have switched positions shoot out beams at the white mobile suit. The space dust floating around are hit, and there's a lot of exploding appearing beside the colony builder.

Leaving those white rings behind it, the profile which anyone can tell is a <<Gundam>> rapidly closes in. Marida continues to let her funnels continue shooting as she lets the <<Kshatriya>> face the enemy. The psycommu on the linear seat lets out a buzzing, and a pale light appears on the all-view screen. It's not the light of the machine, but the unique structure that surrounds the <<Kshatriya>>--the psycommu frame is glowing. The cockpit is glowing just like the enemy in front of

the unit, and the rainbow color glow in the cockpit reaches Marida's eyes.

"Is that guy's built with psycommu all over it…?"

If that's the case...she isn't able to continue thinking. The white mobile suit that dodges the first strike from the funnel pulls out the beam saber on the shoulder and accelerates as it swings the beam saber left and right. The funnels that are hit by the hi-heat particles immediately explode, forming several light rings that light the eternal darkness. *Is it a coincidence? No, he can see the trajectory of the psycommu.* Marida pulls the funnels back in front of her machine, hoping that she will hit the incoming enemy as she shoots them all out.

The distance between them is about 2km, and this is already a zero distance range for the mega-particles travelling at subluminal speed. However, the white mobile suit still dodges it. It predicts the timing of the shots and dodges them. The funnels that have run out of battery power don't have a next shot. Marida evades, and the white mobile suit uses its beam saber to slice off any psycommu in its way as it shoots out the thruster jets on the back and legs. It start to chase the trajectory of the <<Kshatriya>> without hesitation.

The pink beam blade swings up from below and hits the binder on the left side. The tip of the binder is melted and snapped together with the mechanical arm, and a huge explosion rocks the inside of the cockpit. Marida seems as she takes the impact that's so strong that her eyeballs nearly pop out. The fear that's hidden deep inside her—the profile of the <<Gundam>> causes her to be stricken in fear as she cringes. She's being hunted down by the white mobile suit swinging its beam saber, she sees the horrifying eyes at close distance, and her body is screaming with fear and despair of death.

Immediately, a flash appears in another area. The flash appears on the other side of the colony, more than 10km away as it lights the ship parked near the docking bay. The large flash continues on in space for quite some time. Marida understands that this is a signal, and her thoughts have somewhat reverted back to normal. She grips onto the ball-shaped control panel again.

Since the <<Garencieres>> has escaped, there's no reason for me to continue staying here. That cool thinking pulls her mind that's somewhat swallowed by the enemy back. Marida doddes the third

attack of the white mobile suit at close range and presses the trigger of the mega-particle beam guns hidden in her binders.

There are two cannons in each of the 4 binders, and they shoot out beams that are far more powerful than the beams of the funnel. The I-field at the firing point are deflected, causing the shots to scatter like a shotgun and forming a 360 degree bullet screen with the <<Kshatriya>> at the center. The Federation units that are closing in hurriedly evade, and the white mobile suit backs away. Marida immediately steps on the pedal, and the machine immediately leaves the battlefield.

Marida herself is already prepared to be pursued, but the white mobile suit remains there, showing no intention of moving. She checks the damages on the machine, affirms that there are no fatal damages, opens the visor of her helmet and wipes the sweat off her face. The <<Kshatriya>> flies towards the <<Garencieres>> that is off course and checks her remaining funnels.

Including the battle inside the colony, she lost a total of 7 funnels. The direct damage on the machine and the first humiliation she ever felt cause her body and soul to be shaken up. She also couldn't save 'her'. *Has Master returned to the ship safely?* Marida understands that she can only pray and chooses not to speak up, and suddenly, she has an urge to rip her body that's breathing casually.

I can't do anything. But I hope that the white mobile suit's pilot is a 'real' Newtype. If not—

"This is such an ugly battle…sorry, Master."

The fingers that are still trembling press down the ball-shaped control panel. The <<Kshatriya>> activates the thrusters hidden within its binders and leaves the colony battlefield.

Part 27[edit]

The four wings with thrusters hidden within them let out a white light, causing the moss green machine to vanish into the darkness at a rather fast speed. However, this distance can be caught up if they transform into <<Waveriders>>. Riddhe wanted to immediately pursue them, but the wireless communicator lets out a (that's enough, don't pursue it), and the transformation's stopped.

Romeo 001, squad leader Norm's <<ReZEL>> closes in, and uses the machine arm to grab onto the shoulder of Riddhe's machine. "But..!" Riddhe wants to protest, but finds that he relaxed a bit. Anyway, he didn't lose his life today—

(We suffered quite a bit of losses today. Let's go back to the ship to reorganize our forces. We still have to retrieve that <<Gundam>>.)

Norm's voice is full of bitterness. The commander that lost lots of subordinates didn't have the energy to celebrate his survival. He probably wants to go chase them alone and take revenge for his subordinates, but Riddhe's attention was captured by the term <<Gundam>>. He didn't try to empathize with Norm's feelings as he looks at the vacuum.

The unknown object that appeared from the colony builder—the gundam-type white mobile suit seemed to have kept its beam saber, and stops as its back faces countless pieces of space dust. The light from the machine is slowly weakening, and the relaxed limbs aren't moving. It's like the battery was worn out.

Is this to show that it has no intent of fighting us, or is it a trap to make us relax? Riddhe couldn't accept completely that it saved them and mutters, "<<Gundam>>…" the name that he has been hearing from time to time during his childhood. Right now, it brings about a sense of danger that causes the tongue to numb, and makes the sweaty body cold.

"So that's a <<Gundam>>, is it?"

(What else can it be?)

Norm answered with a somewhat unhappy tone, and the white mobile suit transformed again. The V-shaped edges are sealed back together, and the guard closes up, covering the eyes that were glowing weakly. At the same time, the armor plates all over the machine slides, covering the glowing red phosphorescence plates. In less than a second, the white mobile suit immediately changes and reverts back to the original state he saw at the start. The <<Gundam>> vanishes like a mirage, leaving only a mobile suit with a weird horn.

(What kind of joke is this…!) A mutter came from Norm's machine and disengages from Riddhe before going behind the one horned mobile suit. He raises the beam rifle to a shooting position, and Riddhe closes in on the white machine too. (Unidentified pilot, do you hear me? I'm…) The unknown mobile suit continues to stare into space, ignoring Norm's calls. The moonlight reflects off its horn, resembling a unicorn.

Part 28[edit]

The two <<ReZEL>>s that surround the unknown machine from both sides finally seem to have given up on contacting wirelessly. One unit points its beam rifle at the one-horned mobile suit, and the other unit

grabs it from behind and starts to pull it.

Daguza Mackle didn't see the 'transformation' when it was reported through the wireless network, and feels somewhat disappointed as he takes off the binoculars for normal suit use from the helmet. He feels that the bandage that's wrapped around his left wrist is way too troublesome as he lands in the large space gateway that links space to the <<Magallanica>>'s port. Three people wearing ECOAS suits are using a camera to shine on the unknown machine.

He exchanges words with one of them, Alpha squad's leader, Garrett. Garrett asks in surprise, (Commander…! Your wounds…?) Lieutenant Commander Conroy then asks in shock. It seems that they heard that he is alive, but didn't expect him to be able to move. In fact, the head nurse wanted him to rest silently, but his mental state right now doesn't allow him to lie down propely. Daguza doesn't look over at Garrett who's trying to close in, and asks emotionlessly, "What's the situation?"

(The enemy units retreated. There's no signs of reinforcements for now. The <<Magallanica>> has already broken through our suppression. Our reinforcements are searching for the 'box' in the command post. Including the two passengers that were lost in <<Loto>> no. 1, we lost 3 men, and 4 people are wounded at varying levels.)

Though the reporting tone is rather calm, but Conroy's expression is telling him that he's one of the injured. The poker face is ineffective on this second-in-command who followed him for many years; Daguza averts his sights and asks Garrett, "What's the situation with the casualities in the colony?"

(It seems that we can handle the air release. For a hole that size, it'll take at least a month for all the air to flow out.)

Before that, the aid from the neighboring colonies will reach, and the Anaheim Electronics company that's on the moon will have some countermeasures. It'll be a headache dealing with the media, but they will just hand this over to their allies behind the scenes in headquarters and the men in suits. Daguza sighs lightly, and his flank starts to hurt again. He waits patiently for the pain to subside. He managed to keep his life due to the ECOAS' special suit, but he knew that his left wrist is fractured, and there are cracks on his ribs. He's lucky that it's zero gravity, as he doesn't believe that he can pretend to be alright if there's gravity.

"Seal off the <<Magallanica>>'s gate and prevent travel between

colonies. The media may slip in. What about the <<Nahel Argama>>?"

(The ship's not damaged; they're now moving the confiscated items.)

"Tell them to hurry up. It seems that the 'Sleeves' haven't gotten what they want. Tell them not to slack off."

(Understood.) Garrett answers and enters the gate. Daguza glances aside and watches him leave. (Will they still attack?) He hears a voice and directs the stare under his helmet aside. Conroy looks back at him with a meaningful stare, and behind him is the space that's floating with small debris.

"Yes. They're aiming for this. Once they know that we have taken all the things here, they'll definitely target the <<Nahel Argama>> next time."

After saying that, he gives a signal through his expression. Conroy moves towards Daguza. Their helmets are touching each other, and they're talking through the vibration in an 'intimate talk'. Daguza cuts off his communicator and whispers, "What's the situation with the search for Cardeas Vist?"

(It's still going on, but it's likely…)

"Is it true that our guests from Anaheim got to the command post earlier than us?"

(Yes. It seems that there's a secret passage that wasn't recorded in the battle data.)

They sneaked into the <<Magallanica>> from the port while ECOAS was rushing in. Normal Anaheim employees won't do such a thing, and can't possibly do it. Let alone Alberto, the leader, the people accompanying him were likely specialists in that field. He already had this feeling during the meeting in the ship. "We're the bait…they're aiming for the 'box' too." Daguza sighs.

(It's possible. I hear that the higher-ups have some disagreements regarding the strategy this time.)

The people who want to use this chance to get the 'box', and the people who just wants to prevent the 'box' from being passed. When Cardeas, who intended to release the 'box', got eliminated, the two parties will have achieved their aim, and the battle for it will involve the higher-ups—the army, Anaheim Electronics, Vist Foundation's complicated links, the monstrous and savage world—"Really…" Daguza sighs and looks at the moon that's as large as a tennis ball.

“We got involved in some stupid family squabble, and we ended up making such a mess.”

The battle that happen out of a sudden cause many losses. They lost their subordinates, and the enemy escaped. The commander has to accept the sacrifices of battle, but it’s not worth exchanging this for a ‘box’ with unknown contents. *I’ll repay this properly to you people,* Daguza swore in his heart.

The ‘Laplace Box’ will not be handed over to the ‘Sleeves’ or Anaheim. ECOAS will get it and show the monstrous higher-ups what they’re made of. It’s just an empty self-satisfaction, but there’s no other way to repay the souls of those who sacrificed their lives. Parts have only the courage of parts—

(All the intel the ‘box’ were all wiped out. From the timeframe, it doesn’t look like Anaheim or the visitors took it. We nabbed some of the workers here, but we don’t know what’s their level of understanding…)

“We still have that here.”

Daguza points his chin out at the front and says this. The white mobile suit with the horn is being grabbed on the arms by the two <<ReZELs>> into the port. Behind the visor, Conroy frowns.

“It’s developed here, so it can’t possibly have nothing to do with the ‘box’. Let’s investigate slowly.”

That’s the reason why he immediately ordered that filming is to be carried out once he heard the news. Since they’re expecting Anaheim to interfere, ECOAS has to get intel on this white mobile suit on their own.

On hearing Conroy’s affirmative response, Daguza separates the helmet and opens the communication device. The speaker inside suddenly lets out a roar, (WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON!), and then, he sees a man wearing a worker’s normal suit.

The stout profile isn’t an illusion created from the thickness of the spacesuit. It’s the largest obstacle Anaheim sent, Alberto. Daguza stares at his face silently. Alberto nearly flies out into space, and only manages to stop with Conroy grabbing him. He stares at the pure white armor of the mobile suit that’s reflecting the moonlight and looks over, yelling, (WHO THE HELL IN SITTIN IN THERE!) that fat and thick face seems to be bulging.

(THAT’S OUR COMPANY’S PRODUCT. I DON’T WANT ANYONE TO TOUCH HIM. COMMANDER, TAKE IT BACK!)

(We're doing so now, Mr Alberto. Please calm down.)

Alberto shoves aside Conroy's shoulder that's pressing down on him and stares at the white mobile suit. Daguza notices that there's dried blood on the chest of his suit.

(That…<<Unicorn>> isn't an ordinary mobile suit. Who…who activated it…)

His expression and voice don't seem to be worrying about the company's assets; he looks like a kid with his important toys stolen. Daguza thought as he stares at the dried blood stains. The unknown blood stain remains on Alberto's chest like a mark. Alberto glares at this mobile suit called the <<Unicorn>> with a bloodshot expression. His eyes are showing affection and hatred. It's an emotion Daguza himself can't distinguish, and he feels a chill.

Part 29[edit]

The body that's soaked in the dense liquid starts to float up slowly. Banagher opens his eyes and sees the port of the <<Magallanica>> shown on the all-view monitor.

And countless of stars.

The limbs feel heavy, and the body became a limp block of flesh, like all the nerves on the body were snapped. Only the pain at the temples brought about a sense of physical reality, but he still has no strength to move his limbs even though he's in zero gravity. His limbs were very heavy, and he's completely fatigued; it felt like he was scooped up from thick oil.

That's right, when the words <<NT-D>> were shown, he was dipped into a dense fluid. Time became slow, the limbs became heavy, and the enemy's actions look like they were slow-mo replay…and then, what's next?

He didn't know. Lying in a limp manner on the linear seat, Banagher looks at the display board. The words <<NT-D>> disappeared, and the screen shows a pattern that can be read as <<La+>>, blinking steadily at a breathing rate.

"La…+…"

Behind the words were stars that won't blink. Banagher again loses his consciousness and start to sink into a deep sleep.

Part 30[edit]

(That's really a failure on your part, Suberoa Zinnerman.)

The voice echoed throughout the narrow bridge of the <<Garencieres>>, bringing the bitterness of defeat into the heart. Marida, who left the cockpit and returned back to the bridge without taking off her suit, sees the face of Lieutenant Angelo Sauper.

(You were unable to get the <<Laplace Box>>, and didn't manage to save the princess…such a mistake isn't like you. How do you intend to make up for this loss?)

Wrinkles appear between the eyebrows on the forehead, where the fringe was randomly combed back. Angelo's white and neat-looking skin is coupled with an honor guard's uniform that was decorated with buttons and gold braids, giving off the presence of a middle century noble. His age should be about the same as Marida, but it's hard to associate with him, whether it's because of his arrogant tone or the strong sense of ego and bringing this kind of aesthetic over to the battlefield. Or rather, this man reflects the current revolting look of the 'Sleeves'—the reborn Neo Zeon's trend of dressing up.

"It was all an accident. We can only wait for the princess to contact us and wait silently."

We're focusing on actual duty and don't care about appearances at all. Zinnerman was only showing such politeness on the surface. At the operator's seat, where it's impossible to see, Flaste is pointing the middle finger. The <<Geara Zulu>> Gilboa pilot floats outside the window as it moves with the ship, and its mono-eye looks left and right. Gilboa and Marida are exchanging patrol times with each other. But since the enemy has no intention of pursuing, the only problem right now will be the response of <<Palau>> itself. It's possible to see Gilboa listening closely to the communication channel from the outside.

Including the members who died after getting back to the ship, the crew of the <<Garencieres>> lost 3 members, and they also left 'her' alone. This isn't just a simple mission failure. Marida already feels the gravity of the loss without Angelo adding on, but her master's still alive. His back profile continues to remain seated on the captain's seat, and the gruff voice continues to echo throughout the bridge. Marida starts to feel that her nerves are becoming more relaxed as she smells the body odor of cologne and tar. She continues to stare emotionlessly at the roaring Angelo.

(Do you want us to wait around and not do anything…!?) Zinnerman didn't do anything as he waits silently for a chance to talk back, but

another voice was faster, (That's enough, Lieutenant Angelo.)

Angelo's expression changes and immediately straightens his body before retreating out of the screen. A bright red thing appears on the screen that's showing static, and Marida feels that her calm nerves are tensed up again.

The figure in red uniform slowly moves to the front of the screen, and the thick blond hair sways about, falling on the mask that covers his eyes and forehead. His eyes look over through the filter.

(I hear that the enemy who caused Marida to retreat…was a <<Gundam>>. How interesting.)

Though it's impossible to see his eyes under the filter, he must be looking over. Everything about him, from the weird appearance of his masked face to the mocking attitude were all overwhelmed by his overbearing existence. The reborn Neo Zeon's leader, called the 'Second Coming of Char', uses his own presence to overwhelm everyone and controls the mood. Marida can't help but clench her fists

and look over at the bewitching red filter.

(Maybe I'll sortie. <<Garencieres>>, continue to check on the movements of the Federation Fleet.)

Full Frontal merely gives such an instruction. "Yes." Zinnerman answers and adjusts his posture,

"I'll risk on my life to make up for this failure."

He added this line for emphasis, but Zinnerman's eyes can't shake away the suspicious look in them. Full Frontal doesn't know how distant both of them are as he smiles and says, (There's no need to keep remembering your mistakes.)

(Once you own up and improve on it, that will be enough. This is the right an adult has.)

The face under the mask is smiling, and that chilling smile seem to give the impression that his face is the mask itself, and causes goosebumps on Marida.

Volume 3 – The Red Comet

Chapter 1[edit]

Part 1[edit]

("…Even though it's an initial estimation, I've already tabulated the accountable damages for you. We can use the work hazard insurance for those who died in the line of work, but it's harder to determine what to do with the people who died due to other causes.")

The face that was shown on the screen was of a woman's, a face that one could hardly believe was over 50 years old. The medium-long blond hair still retained its glow, and the cheeks that were slightly protruding never lost their elasticity. The background was of a dull color that was suited for business, and the lips with lipstick on even look bewitching.

Even so, it was not appropriate to describe this woman as young and lively. This 'woman' that appeared was not one a man would recognize as one—or rather, recognize as an ideal 'woman' despite her beauty. The reason behind this thinking was because of her eyes. In her wish

to become treated as an upper-class lady, the probing eyes were giving off an icy cold magnetism. The greedy expression of the woman who was never satisfied with anything and only hoped to continue take in more was showing an evil tension.

(“Considering how the media would react, it’s more appropriate that we should offer some form of compensation to the victims. My husband will do something with regards to this as well.”)

After saying that, Martha Vist Carbine remained silent, perhaps waiting for the other party to respond. The other displays were showing all sorts of information like ‘insurance claims’, ‘medical fees’ and ‘survivor pension’ as each individual estimated sum scrolled down the displays. The amount of the total fees required to revive the colony was enough to match the budget of a small country in the old centuries, but Martha’s expression was rather calm as if she merely met a small car accident. Right below the numerous displays that were emulated in the air, “That’s really well thought out.” Syam Vist responded while looking similarly calm.

The body that laid down on the bed did not show any signs of moving, and the side of the emotionless face was basked under the light reflected off the displays. The Vist Foundation leader, who had been watching how the world changed ever since the start of the Universal Century and fought through many backdoor wars multiple times before making it till here, never changed his sharp expression even when he was lying down frailly on the bed. The presence he himself gave off never once faded. (“Someone will deal with this, so shut up. Is that what you mean?”) The voice that continued were so cold it felt like they were piercing into his bones.

(“This accident happened in a colony operated by Anaheim Electronics. No matter how we counter, it’s impossible to prevent the stocks from falling, right? I know very well that my role is not to let the voices of blame reach the Foundation.”)

Martha laughed away the leader’s sarcastic remark, narrowed her eyes and showed a suspicious look. The display beside her showed the words ‘A large-scale terrorist attack happened at Industrial 7’, ‘Is it done by the Neo Zeon guerillas?’, ‘The number of dead and missing people has already passed 600’, ‘The Federation space army has already issued warning to the forces guarding each side to remain alert’ and all sorts of such messages continued to appear and disappear. Only the top half silhouette of the news broadcaster or the reference footages of Industrial 7 when it was being built could be seen on the display, and there were no footages of what happened

there at all. As for the footages the residents there provided to the media—the Federation units using beam rifles inside the colony and crashing into the residential areas—they could not be seen about 30 minutes ago, whether it was the TV or the Net. Syam shows an expression as if he never saw anything in the first place to avoid Martha's doubt. "Cardeas did that. I don't know anything." He simply answered calmly.

("You managed to argue back first…") sighing, Martha could only show wrinkles as her lips give a bitter smile. ("I'm happier than anything to see you being so happy and lively, grandfather. I hope that I can go over to meet you in the near future.")

"You don't have to see such a sad old man like me who watched my son and grandson died earlier than me. Those who are still involved in the current world affairs should have something else to do, right?"

("Please don't say that. We're siblings with the same blood, so of course I'm being emotional now that my older brother died. But since I've already wedded into the Carbine family, I can't just dwell in sadness. If any independent action by the Vist Foundation cause Anaheim to be dragged down, how can I possibly meet my husband and my father-in-law? Besides, I've already got the approval to take over brother's duties as the head of the Foundation…")

After saying that without practically no sincerity, Martha gives a smirk to the display. The matter of succession was not decided through hierarchy, but through the agreement of most of the family members, and there's something behind the expression. Anaheim Electronics was the family business of the Carbine family she married into, and while keeping this position, she use the muscle power that surpassed her husband to interfere with all sorts of affairs, playing a vital role in linking the Foundation and Anaheim in such a way that they were more than just partners. Syam's eyebrows could only twitch slightly as he see his granddaughter's shamelessness in not denying nor admitting that she was involved in this incident.

("It's the Vist Foundation's leader right to know the location of the cryo the boss is in and the view of the 'Box', and also a duty. Please take a nap before I go meet you, boss. ")

After leaving this message, the communication was cute off. The many displays shown in the air disappear, and darkness and silence return back to the space that had nothing but a bed. Soon after, the panel installed on the wall of the dome increase in luminosity until the actual image of the universe was shown inside the room, and Syam's bed was already surrounded by the clear stars.

The cloud of stairs light up every single corner of the room as if the floor was scattered with silver powder, and the image of outer space showed all corners of the cryo the Foundation's boss was in. Gael Chan hid himself in the darkness where neither the earth nor the moon could be seen as he saw that bed that was floating there in a lonely manner, sighed and stepped forward. As he lies on the bed that acted as a cryo device, Syam mutters to him 'just laugh all you want' as the side of his face that had lost all its glory shows self-mocking wrinkles.

"This is the portrait of the Vist Foundation."

"I can't laugh at all. I didn't fulfill my responsibility in protecting my boss."

Syam turns his stare at Gael, who's standing about 3 meters away from him. It's been half a day since the sudden battle in Industrial 7 and when he learnt about Cardeas Vist's death. The Foundation's boss had been through a lifetime that's far too long for a human, watched too many of his relatives die, and now, it's impossible to see any sadness in him. He lost his most trusted successor, and watched the Foundation he single-handedly built up move on its own. Right now, he could not even let out a sigh—maybe this was Syam's current mood. If he could already realize that his own relative were all involved in such series of plots and gradually becoming the next successor, how would he feel—

Gael himself wasn't as open-minded. He wasn't able to protect his master, Cardeas, and he did not even fulfill the duty of destroying the "Unicorn", the final order that was given. Even though he understood that all his paths of entry were already blocked by the Federation's special forces, the burning hangar deck and the passages being sealed weren't enough to be excuses. In fact, Cardeas himself dragged his heavily wounded body and managed to reach the "Unicorn" successfully before dying—he was devoured by the flames the moment he left the cockpit, and he was blown into bits the moment he was struck by the incoming shrapnel. The surveillance cameras at the hangar clearly caught the image.

The dire consequences happened in front of him was because of his own negligence. The bald head wrapped in the bandage sank as Gael clenched his burned fist. Just regretting alone can't change anything, and these are all the results of fate—if it were Cardeas, he would probably say such a thing. Gael had already lots this boss that would comfort him like this. That one and only client of his who could understand him heart to heart; that only man who was worth selling his life to, whether in the army or in the underground society.

“Since it’s Cardeas, I suppose he has already prepared a failsafe such that even if he died, he can protect the secret tightly…someone like Martha will be forceful. She’s different from the men who’re concerned about their pride; she will not have any reservations when carrying out her plots. From the way she could get the approval of the family as the substitute leader in such a short time, I think it’s better to assume that it’s only a matter of time before she finds this place.”

“I’m a man. I won’t just be protective of my own pride, I’ll even swear allegiance for the sake of my own pride.”

At that moment, Gael forgot about being tense in front of the boss. He lifts his face.

“So long as you permit, boss, I’ll be willing to take revenge for Master Cardeas even if I have to sacrifice my life.”

Martha Carbine was staying in the lunar city Von Braun that’s under the protection of Anaheim Electronics. If the Foundation itself was just an organization meant to expand the family’s earnings, then she’ll be described as a really outstanding person who revived and expanded the authority of the Vist Foundation. She, who could even interfere with politics without a problem, detected Syam and Cardeas’ plans for Laplace Box and got the Federation army to attack Industrial 7. Even though the battle that got intense was a result of unforeseen circumstances, the main reason for Cardeas’ death was on Martha. In terms of underground talk, there’s no one else other than her who ‘settled the bill’.

Syam turns his head slightly at a way where one could not even detect, and his face that’s half-buried in the pillow faces over here. Gael gives an unwavering expression as he gets this answer,

“Do you want me to command you to kill my own granddaughter now?”

It was a growl that was full of rage, causing the temperature within Gael to drop. Gael’s stiffened by the other person’s overwhelming presence before he could even reflect on his words, “…I’m really sorry” and lowers his head.

“Very good. Cardeas did get a very good subordinate. Since this is because of what Cardeas did, we can only believe that things will proceed in the positive direction; no matter whether it’s the whereabouts of the Laplace Box or the future of Earth Celestial sphere.”

Syam clasps his hands on the blanket and closes his eyes. Gael had nothing to say and could only bow and answer ‘yes…’, showing a

professional expression as he lifts his head to look at the boss.

“About the Box, I’ve already investigated on the details involving the pilot of the “Unicorn”.”

Gael reaches his hand to the floor and operates on the touch-type display that rose up from the floor silently. The holographic display again lights up the space above the bed, showing the photo of a boy’s face.

“Banagher Links, 16 years old, a student studying at Anaheim Electronics. Registered from Side 1 area 3’s ‘Eden’. No special positive or negative data on him, and no records of him taking part in political activities. I don’t understand why he came to the “Magallanica”, but he did meet the leader hours before the battle. As for what happened when both of them met, it’s puzzling…”

Gael gives an overview of what happened yesterday, including the accidental meeting with ‘her’ . How Banagher, who was taken back to Industrial 7 once, managed to enter the “Magallanica” and ride on the “Unicorn”, was a mystery to Gael. However, the pilot login data that was sent to the Command Module “Magallinca” matched Banagher Links information from the records in Industrial 7. The fact that he piloted the “Unicorn” and forced the “Sleeves’” mobile suits to retreat was without a doubt. Also, ther was the fact that he was taken in by a Federation ship—

“To be registered as the pilot of the “Unicorn”, one has to gain the biometric authorization of the leader. In other words, Master Cardeas chose this boy as the pilot and died after that. I can only deduce that, so what happened that time…”

Due to its nature, the records of the “Unicorn’s” pilot could not be easily erased after its logged it. There was a chance to destroy all the system, so Cardeas must had his reason for handing the “Unicorn” to the outsider Banagherr Links. Gael starts to stroke his chin as he looks at what seems to be a boyish instead of a youthful face, but was suddenly startled by a snicker.

Syam lets out the snicker as he watches the face of this boy that’s projected in space. His wrinkled face was smiling. Gael frowns in response, and Syam mutters, “I see. So you don’t know.” and turns to stare at Gael, who in turn inadvertently gulped his own saliva.

“Don’t you understand? He’s the new hope. Cardeas handed the “Unicorn” over to the most suitable person…”

Syam turns his eyes to look at the boy on the display and narrows his

eyes as if he's afraid of light. The boss of the Foundation let out a kind grandfather's expression, and Gael could only blink hard bewilderedly.

Part 2[edit]

On the display of the notepad-type PC, the designed English alphabets were shown. It was a simple logo formed as a combination of the letters U and C.

"The UC plan, the codename of the army reassembly plan that's affiliated to the Federation fleet, one that the company underwent under extreme security; the "Unicorn" was a machine that was developed as the flagship under the project of the same name."

In the dim room, the man with the frail-looking face said as the lamp shone on him. Aaron Terzieff was a 32 years old staff member of Anaheim Electronics and the person in charge of the armor material section in the development of the RX-0. As the battle broke out in Industrial 7, he tried to escape with the other workers from the Magallanica, but was detained by ECOAS as he was too slow. As most of the relevant data of the plan was wrecked, he was viewed as one of the people who knew most about the plans regarding the RX-0 —

"Unlike the Mobile Suits of the past, this unit's biggest unit is that it's fully covered with Psycoframe all over the body. The development base was the Anaheim Electronics' factory in Granada, and about one month ago, we have already finished both Test Unit 1 and 2 separately. Unit 2 was sent to Earth, and right now, it should be undergoing activation tests in the presence of gravity. I was in charge of Unit 1, and about 3 weeks ago, I was ordered by the company to send it to Industrial 7. The notification was an official document, and the superiors said that everything would be over if I only worked for another month…"

"Mr Aaron."

Daguza Mackle interrupted Aaron's pleading-like voice with an emotionless face as he said, "I'm sorry, but we're rather unaware of the technological side of things. Please describe the Psycommu, and get down to the details as much as possible."

"Yes…"

On the other side of the table, Aaron nodded his head in agreement "Yes…" and gives a look behind to ask for permission. Standing behind him, Lieutenant Garrett nodded his head. Aaron then starts to use his trembling fingers to operate the computer he brought along.

Before this, Aaron had reached out for the computer without permission before and had his hand twisted behind his back by Garrett, so this should be just precaution on Aaron's side. Daguza senses that Lieutenant Commander Conroy was beside Garrett, shrugging and nudging his large body in the darkness, and deliberately leans forward to stare at the message on the screen. He used the cast-like left arm to slam the table and let out a shrill sound.

"Psycoframe. Basically put, it's a unique alloy that has a psycommu functions on it. The theory behind it is to shrink the computer chips to the minimum and level them together with metal particles on the frame."

The image shown on the display seemed to be an enlarged image of the psycommu under the microscope. If one stared at it closely, one could find what was obviously man-made chips lined in the gaps between the hive-shaped metal particles. That orderly yet mechanical construct felt more like a living cell than an object.

"As you know, the psycommu can receive and amplify the pilot's brainwaves…or you can call it neural waves, and project the pilot's consciousness into the movements of the machine. The psycommu which is the main system is linked over to allow the psycoframe to receive the pilot's neural waves and allows the pilot and machine high-mobility coordination to happen. Due to the strength and production and all sorts of problems in the past, we could only install this system around the cockpit. However, the RX-0 in this plan uses psycoframe in all the mobile parts."

Then, the CG image of the RX-0 appeared on the screen, and above the moveable parts that formed the frame, there was a red light blinking. As it was just a simple introductory picture, it was impossible to see the details. Even though Aaron was one of the developers, he could only download this much data from his terminal. Daguza did not say anything as he merely prompted Aaron to continue.

"Due to the actual assignment of the full-set psycoframe, the pilot's neural waves can reach the machine's activation system. In other words, the pilot does not need to 'control' the mobile suit as the word implies, and can control it basically through thoughts. Of course, all the joints are all magnet coated so in theory, the reaction speed of the RX-0 is unlimited. One can say that the machine's one with the body… no, it may be even faster. No matter how outstanding a pilot is, there will be a lag of milliseconds from the moment the pilot detects danger to the moment the pilot reacts. The RX-0 interface far exceeds the reaction speed of the human body."

“But in that case, the pilot’s body shouldn’t be able to react, right?”

If a metal giant that was more than 20m tall could immediately react to the pilot’s brainwaves, one could imagine the outcome if it moved at a speed that far exceeds human reflexes. No matter how big the mobile suit was, a slight movement will create vibrations of several meters, and no matter how sturdy the machine itself was built, the pilot inside would be all dizzy. “That’s right.” Aaron himself agreed with this sentiment.

“In order to reduce the large G force that happens when the machine moves, the RX-0 has a Shock Absorber that specializes in reducing the impact, and there’s also the pilot’s suit. However, even with this equipment, an ordinary person can’t endure the discomfort of piloting for a long time. We have considered the stress the psycommu puts on the brain and body, and the maximum limit of continual operation is around 5 minutes. Thus, the limiter will be activated when the system is set in normal mode, and the NT-D device will only be activated in battle.”

The horn on the forehead opened up to show a V-sign, and the shoulders, chest and leg armor slid. The psycommu frame hidden underneath appeared, and the thrusters and boosters of the machine that could be said to assure destructive power and mobility bared out. This was the real form of the RX-0—if this was really the case, the appearance of the so-called “Unicorn” would be some form of a limiter and fixed state. As he watches the CG of the RX-0 gradually changed its appearance, Daguza started to feel a chill inside his heart, and whispers, “What’s NT-D?”

“NT-D is the name of the OS that operates the full psycoframe. I was only in charge of the exterior in the past, so I don’t really know the specifics. However, I hear that NT-D is the shortened form of Newtype-Drive.”

The unexpected term echoed in Daguza’s ears as a ripple rose in his heart. After giving a meaningful look to Conroy, Daguza answered back to Aaron “I see” in a monotonous voice.

“After the RX-0 was moved to the Magallanica, it was once modified by someone. You should know clearly that the system wasn’t involved in the initial design, right?”

A B5 sized photo was displayed on the table, and Aaron’s expression obviously wavered. The army had taken close range shots on the interface panel in the cockpit when the RX-0 was taken back into the ship. In the photo, the terminal port showed a red symbol that showed

“La+”. “I’m only in charge of the armor outside, so any questions about the system is a little too…” Aaron answered, but Daguza did not show any wavering in his stare as he questioned,

“Mr Aaron, you better think through this before answering. The army does outsource assignments to civilian enterprises, but military use mobile suit developments are still part of the items in the Federation Technological Research Department that we have to report to the higher ups, and you may be deemed a suspect of taking up military resources, you know?”

“Why…!? I’m just…”

“Industrial 7 is a colony registered under Anaheim Electronics, but it’s different for the Magallanica. In fact, the Vist Foundation can be said to be outside of legal means. After the final adjustments of the RX-0 ‘s OS, it had a program that wasn’t in the manual installed into it. I don’t think you can simply pass this with a I don’t know.”

“I really don’t! I only knew of the new program that was installed together with the NT-D after reading the updated specs design. There were rumors that the new program was provided by the Vist Foundation, but I don’t know anything else other than this! Even the activation conditions of the NT-D is an undisclosed classified secret to us who are in charge of hardware.”

“Activation conditions?”

“The pilot can’t just remove the RX-0’s limiter at will. The NT-D will only activate when certain conditions are met. I only heard that the program installed on the Magallanica…the Laplace Program was a program meant to install a new condition on the NT-D. As long as the machine’s controls aren’t affected, we never questioned too much into such hardware stuff.”

“But you should have taken part in the activation tests.”

“The activation was still in simulation mode. The Laplace Program was only installed after the tests!”

Two hands slammed onto the table hard, and Aaron covered his head with his hands as he sprawled down on the table. Daguza used his eyes to stop Garrett, who wanted to pull him up, and stared at the shoulders that were trembling.

“Of course I felt that it was weird. For a manufactured military machine, there’s too much classified information. Even since I reached the Magallanica, I was forbidden to make contact with outside, and I had to remain in full vigilance under the Foundation all day…the weirdest thing was that none of the workers had any relations to the army. However, ever since the war with Neo Zeon ended, the mobile suit productions had only been at the stage where slight modifications were made as we couldn’t even try out new designs. During this time, even if we find it suspicious, the technicians would only close an eye and work on new technology that’s being produced at such a time. Besides, the machine that was developed was that famous “Gundam”.”

““Gundam”?”

Aaron’s depressed eyes looked up as he answered, “That’s our nickname for it”, and gave a forsaken smile on his face.

“The moment we saw its NT-D activated…we could only treat it as if it was deliberately designed to be like that. That’s what all the involved personnel called it, the “Unicorn Gundam”.”

Part 3[edit]

“Then, what should we do? Do we use the drugs on him?”

Five minutes later, Conroy asked as they stared at the monitor showing the camera footage of Aaron’s face. Daguza drank the salted coffee, a Navy tradition, and asked back “What do you think?”

“It’ll just be a waste of time for us to continue. He probably would not

know any more even if we probe in more. The Vist Foundation's secretive measures were well played, giving each department only the information they're in charge of and not letting them deduce the entire thing."

Daguza did not disagree. Aaron, who was left in the monitor room, would either just touch the computer that was left in the room deliberately subconsciously or look down with a pale expression. It was not that they did not doubt that it was an act on his part, but his testimony were the same as the other developers. Besides, they were not professional interrogators. Daguza's feeling the same as well, and he didt want to use the confession drug without being confident and then the few remaining survivors into vegetables.

They would normally hand them over to headquarters to begin formal interrogations. Daguza put down the mug that had coffee in it and checked the numbers on the monitor <<11:17:32/04/08/0096>>. 8th April, 11.17 in the morning, about half a day after the battle cased, and it's been over 6 hours since the ""Nahel Argama"" left Industrial 7. Even though they were using the detention facilities inside the ship to question the 4 developers held inside the Magallanica, they got such messages that felt like they were blinded. After spending several hours listening to testimonies regarding the UC plan and trying to probe their relationship with Laplace Box, it felt like they were led by the blind as well. Daguza and the rest of ECOAS were feeling such futility.

"Let's leave aside the UC project for now. The reassembly plan of the space forces was already announced in the Mid-term defense <Mid-term Defense Contingency Plan>. I heard that they're to complete the unification of all the colonies that were scattered, and the earth orbital forces that are being built up to the level of the main fleets in the past is to hurry and prepare for the 100 year anniversary in UC 0100 4 years later."

The hulking Conroy rested his large body that dwarfed any wrestler on the wall of the monitor room, rubbing his eyes as he said so. The UC plan that was declared to have ended when the RX-0 was finished was planned as part of the space forces reassembly plan—all the members of the plan admitted. "I heard of it before. That's a plan that was mentioned when the military budget was being trimmed, right?" Garrett let the chair at the console turn around and said to them.

"That plan never had any intent of mass building new fleets. In other words, it's just a compression plan to gather all the forces. This is the first time I heard that they developed a new mobile suit."

"It's not completely impossible. There's also the main show of the

Republic of Zeon returning its self-independence back in UC 0100. They're gathering the forces at such a time, and there's the powerful new mobile suit…"

Daguza dragged his voice with half the mind to show how mystified he was, "Is this a PR activity on the military side?" Garrett frowned.

"I should say that the Federation government intends to show off. The reason why the main forces are stationed at colonies all over the place is to prevent the remnants of Zeon from rebelling. What should they do if they want to recall these fleets?"

"Ah…" Conroy's hint caused Garrett mug to remain in the air just as it was about to be brought to his lips. "So the Government intends to eliminate the remnants of Zeon before that? But—"

"It's not as easy as saying this goal. However, the Republic of Zeon's returning their self-independence over to us is a rare chance to get rid of the name of Zeon. The Federation Government intends to use 0100 as the deadline to wipe out all remnants of Zeon, use that to reassemble the Earth orbital forces, and after all those things, they can say that they finally ended the nightmare since the One Year War. What will be need to pave the way will most likely be the UC plan, the plan to develop the "Gundam" to eliminate Neo Zeon."

It was dangerous to predict and conclude with only a few reports, but if one thought of it this way, a lot of things could be understood. In this time where military arming was gradually reduced, the development of a mobile suit with new technology, the reason to search for the limits of the machine even if the people involved have to view the pilot's life as secondary, and the fact that the appearance of this mobile suit was similar to the "Gundam" Zeon so feared as the "White Devil"—

"Cardeas Vist hid a secret that can topple the Federation inside that machine and intended to hand it over to Neo Zeon…how ironic.""

If it really ended up like that, it would just be a slight commotion of sending salt to the enemy. Conroy and Garrett saw Daguza smiling bitterly, and looked at each other.

"Then, leader, is that mobile suit the Laplace Box?"

"Leaving aside whether we can put an end to this speculation, we do have enough proof here. We have a machine that was ready to be moved out with the spare parts and the Laplace Program that was only installed when it was moved to the Magallanica. I have no idea which level of the Vist Foundation got involved with this plan, but the Unicorn's the symbol of the Foundation after all."

The moment Daguza finished, the left arm and flank that were numb started to ache, and he did not continue . It seemed that the effect of the painkiller had worn out. Conroy seemed to detect this situation as he wanted to say something, but Daguza averted his stare and quickly said before Conroy could, “What we can understand is that the weapon was built for Newtypes to pilot.”

“The Newtype Theory is the core of Zeon. Removing Zeonism is something that has to be linked with eliminating the remnants of Zeon. It’s really puzzling why they would gamble on the Federation’s trust in the plan and take a weapon meant for Newtypes.”

“Fight fire with fire…you can think of it that way, but I heard that the Newtype research facility was already closed.”

“No matter how we deny it, the conclusion is that we can’t ignore how useful Newtype weapons are, is it? In fact, all the Gundam pilots up till now are…”

“It’s because of this, that the elimination of Newtypes has to be carried out by non-Newtypes. This is to crush the myth that’s ingrained deeply in people’s hearts.”

Conroy and Garrett immediately remained silent as the short silence descended on the narrow monitor room. Daguza darnk the coffee that went cold, and said,

“The UC plan, the NT-DNewtype Drive, the psycommuu…there might be other things we don’t know of. It’s the same with the things seemingly related to Laplace Box. That “Gundam” really seem fishy.”

Getting right down to it, why did it suddenly move on its own? Daguza suddenly recalled the appearance of the boy he found in the cockpit. *Now what’s his name…* Daguza’s mind is somewhat slowed by the use of the painkiller, and at this moment, he heard a voice that rang through the room’s interal phone.

The members of ECOAS were in charge of this monitor room and the facilities used to detain the prisoners. Even the servicemen on this battleship were not permitted inside. “What is it?” Conroy picked up the receiver and gave a grumpy look. Daguza could read from his lips that Alberto called, and sighs as he walked towards the door. He unlocked the door to this room that could become an airlock in emergencies and pushed the metal door aside.

Alberto, who was standing right in front of the door, was nearly slammed by the metal door that was opened as he backs away in a jumpy manner. The gravity block inside the ship was not that much

different from the moon, and quite some skill was required to control and move the body. The ‘guest’ from Anaheim was supported by his subordinates who were dressed in suits. He tried to steady himself, but this time, he nearly trips forward.

The man shook off the hands of the subordinates who wanted to support him again and forcefully steadied his feet on the floor of the passage. He tidied the collar that was buried under the collar’s flesh and stared at Daguza. “What is it?” Daguza merely answered the expected antagonistic stare with an emotionless look.

“You’re already asking me what’s wrong? I’ve already sent someone to say that I’ll be questioning the members of the plan who are detained. Besides, they’re our company’s staff…”

“Right now, they’re important people managed under the military. We can’t let civilians take part in the questioning.”

“Then, I request to investigate the “Unicorn” that’s inside this ship. That’s our company’s property, right? We have the right as it’s not handed over to the military yet.”

“Of course. We’ll be requesting your company for assistance. We’ll contact you at that moment. Please leave for now.”

The conversation between both of them was not any different from before. Alberto used ECOAS to get the initiative and searched the “Magallanica” for any information about the box. He, who showed an out-of-character attitude when the “Unicorn” appeared and demanded for it to be taken back, naturally did not feel happy about being lurched behind for these few hours. Alberto wanted to start arguing back immediately as he glanced at his subordinates who were dressed in suits. The fat and thick face twists mysteriously. Once Daguza detected that it was a smile, Alberto said without a care in the world, “Looks like we still lack a common understanding to this situation, Commander Daguza.”

“What happened in Industrial 7 isn’t something that can be covered up by chopping off the heads of to three conspirators. If there’s anything wrong with the response, even Central Command can collapse. It’s better for both sides to give some leeway to keep the damage to the minimum. Regarding this, I suppose the Supreme Council Committee would have a similar agreement, isn’t it?”

The man’s expression and voice showed that he felt that if the superior’s name was used, the soldier would shut up. Daguza took a deep breath and calmly answered, “It’s true that it does seem that we

lack a common understanding."

"To me, the damage was already done. Including my subordinates, several people, probably even hundreds have died. Even if we try to assist each other, they won't be revived."

Perhaps Daguza had some intent to restrain himself, but his eyes were showing some killing intent. Alberto, who was definitely overwhelmed by the mood, backed away and knocked his back into his subordinates who did not move. He glanced back at the stare he once tried to avert and seemingly muttered to himself, "…You're unexpectedly fragile for a soldier being the leader of ECOAS." In response, Daguza remained silent.

"Never mind. That's how it will be then. If there's difficulty in coming to an agreement, we'll let the topdown handle it. I'll report to the higher-ups as soon as possible and get the company HQ to mark the ECOAS headquarters in Luna Two."

"Do as you please. That's if the laser communicator can still work while we're hidden in the shoal space region."

Alberto's eyebrows twitched slightly. Daguza stared at his face and continued in a manner of fact, "Right now, the "Nahel Argama" is still hidden in the remnants of Side 5. This place is the remains of the battle of Loum, but there's not many places to hide a ship. If the enemy intercepts our long-distanced contact, it'll be very hard for us to find another place to hide."

The "Nahel Argama" was not that reckless to solo through the space areas where the enemies might appear after having lost most of their forces. They could only remain in the remnants of the colony until the reinforcements arrived and seal off all contact to the outside. The current situation of the "Nahel Argama" was already anticipated by Daguza. If not, he would not talk to the official of Anaheim in such a direct tone.

The enraged Alberto looked like he realized what Daguza was thinking as he gave a defiant look,

"I'll talk to Captain Otto."

After glaring at Daguza, Alberto said as he turned around.

"He's a reasonable soldier."

After leaving these words behind, Alberto and his men, who gave dangerous looks walked down the passageway before leaving. The cylindrical gravity block was built with the inner wall arcing inwards,

making a gradual slope. About more than 30m away from here, the other group disappeared at the edge of the ceiling, and Daguza waited for Alberto's large butt to disappear from his sights before sighing softly. He breathed hard to ease the pain that was gradually rising up his flank and asked Conroy, who was been watching the conversation from the door, "That boy just now hasn't woken up yet?" "Yes." Conroy's thick eyebrows frowned.

"His body is a lot weaker than we thought."

"It can't be helped…he went through such acceleration just now. Once he wakes up, report to me. We have to hurry our investigations on the "Unicorn"."

"Yes. If possible, I really want to go back to Luna Two and carry out investigations without other people interfering!"

The small asteroid Juno, "Luna Two", was dragged over from the asteroid belt to obtain resources needed to build colonies. It was the Federation's largest base in space ever since it was steadied on the lunar orbit 50 years ago, and the special commands headquarters that was the base of ECOAS was also located there. There was no better place to investigate the RX-0 better than Luna Two, but the problem was that the Earth was right in the middle from there to where the ship was, as they're directly opposite from each other. Sighing, Daguza added on, "Tough one."

"Londo Bell's reinforcements are too slow. If the fleets that are stationed nearby are unwilling to move, it's likely that the Nahel Argama will reach the moon that's closer. Once we enter Anaheim's headquarters, we'll lose the chance to investigate the "Unicorn"."

Though the moon did have a military command post, it was not as secure as ECOAS in terms of secrecy. Besides, if Anaheim lodged a complaint, the RX-0 will have to be left to the legislature, and it would definitely be moved away from the base. In this situation, Anaheim's outstanding lawyers in the Earth Celestial Sphere would try to drag on the legal case and use this time to thoroughly investigate the RX-0. Once a conclusion was made, the machine that was returned to the military will be an empty shell, and all data related to the box will be wiped clean…this outcome was extremely obvious. No matter what anyone said, the moon itself was a world revolving around Anaheim Electronics.

Hiding in the shoal space region was their one and only chance. Even if Anaheim might talk later, they would have to do something before Anaheim does. "Understood". Conroy answered, showing that he

understood the situation.

“So please get some sleep, commander.”

Daguza heard these words that were quipped in at the end, and look like he was unprepared for this sudden attack as he glanced back at Conroy.

“When was the last time you slept? Around 30 hours ago, I believe? Nobody can replace you, so please treat your rest as part of the job.”

The voice of the vice commander who had been with him for many years causes Daguza’s tense feelings to ease somewhat. *That’s good.* Daguza watches Conroy leave these words as he left the monitor room, and leaned his body that felt extremely heavy onto the wall, maintaining this state as he closed his eyes for a while.

I’m old now. Daguza felt the bitterness that came with age in the chest of his almost-40 body that was starting to become useless.

Part 4[edit]

There’s a piano sound. I know this—Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata” mother liked. The music that was quiet, sad yet maddening in a way that the heart would flutter, echoed throughout the high-ceiling and wide room. It felt like it was saying that his distant past could only look up from the Earth to the moon as it excited the human heart once before.

Looking up, the large tapestry hung on the wall filled his sights. The tapestry that reached all the way to the ceiling had flowers and animals woven on the scarlet red background of the cloth, and there was a woman in a sari dress standing in the middle of each tapestry. Playing the small piano, holding the flower garland, holding a sweet; in the six tapestries that decorated the room, the women were all focused on doing different things. Beside her, there was a lion with a thick mane and a unicorn with the horn on its forehead pointing to the sky—

“Sight, hearing, touch, scent, taste. What these illustrations describe all the 5 senses that come with most living creatures when they were born, but as for this 6th one…what this ‘tent’ represents, there’s still no conclusion.”

Banagher was carried up by the large hands of his father, and stared at the tapestry with the tent woven in the middle. The lady put the ornament into the box the servant girl beside her was holding, and intended to enter the tent. At the top of the tent, there were the words in ancient language ‘My only wish’. Banagher read these words in the

way he was taught before, and his father smiled happily as he said, *“Amazing, you remembered.”*

But even father doesn’t know what “My only wish” is about…

“It was drawn because that person didn’t understand. And we think. Only humans are blessed with such ability. The unicorn that’s woven on the tapestry and the music that’s heard now show what that person felt through the human eyes and ears. That is a certain feeling the five senses can’t comprehend, a certain feeling that transcends reality… maybe that might be called an existence called god, or maybe that’s just an illusion created as a result of a human’s wish. However, as long as we believe in that existence and do something for the world, that chance will become reality.

Do you understand? Banagher? Only humans have God. It’s a great power to visualize their ideals and go close to their ideals…the god that exist within, called possibilities.”

I don’t understand completely, but I know father feels that he wants to teach me something important. Banagher stared at his father’s face.

“That’s the source of the power that allowed humans to rise up amongst countless animals and even land in space. It’s true that humans devoured Earth until it was drained. They wasted their precious knowledge on killing each other, and the past wars have forced half of humanity to their deaths. Based on these, some people concluded that as a species, humans have reached their end. But I feel that’s a pessimistic view, Past wars have shown the possibilities of Newtypes to people. Humans are the ones who can find hope in any given situation and use it to overcome any situation. Knowledge and kindness, things that make humans what they are, come from possibility. Right now, the world’s involved in the mess of despair and rebirth. You people who’re to live on in the future must create a world where people can accept their deaths properly as humans. You must bring out the possibility within you and fulfill a world that can showcase the power and kindness of humanity.”

“What you’re saying it is too difficult…Banagher still doesn’t understand.”

His mother said without stopping her hands from playing the piano. The face that showed itself from the grand piano seemed to be smiling. *“This kid is special.”* After saying that, Banagher’s father carried him up again as he smiled.

“If you’re willing to try, you’ll be able to understand. This boy has the

ability to listen to others. Even if he doesn't understand, he'll use his own way to try and feel what others intend to expression. This is an inherent gift. Once a person's 5, the nature will show itself like this. This isn't a talent that can be nurtured whether you want to or not. This kid's special."

Special. This word brought about a chill into his chest. The room that was surrounded by soft light suddenly darkened. He could not see the tapestries, and his father's hands were not there to hold him. A red light came out from the darkness, and just when that light was about to disappear, many lights appeared all over the place, moving on their own. They looked like fireflies he saw on the TV, but they were much faster. These red lights would reach places Banagher could not see, and sometimes, some icy cold needle-like things would poke his body.

Antagonistic intent, this term appeared in his mind. As he hated this piercing feeling, Banagher desperately tried to note where the lights were. He wanted to teach these things really badly.

"Don't be fooled by what you can see or hear. Use your feelings. If it's you, you can do it."

Banagher heard his father. He closed his eyes and tried to feel that icy cold object. This was not too hard as these guys would give a sharp and painful presence before they attacked. *Just aim there and attack. There's no need to use your hands or your feet; just use your head to think.* Once he detected the presence, the belt that's tied on his head moved on its own as he thought of teaching those things a lesson. *See? Another one down.*

However, the opponent would attack in response to my presence, so I can't show my emotions too much. I have to imagine that there's a pair of eyes staring outside, and I can see the entire battlefield completely. I have to read the flow of the enemy's presence and lure them into a corner—

"THAT'S ENOUGH!"

The piano let out a distorted sound. His mother's face came out from the darkness as her hands were still on the piano. She was glaring at his father with a horrifying expression.

"What are you intending to do to Banagher!? Aren't you treating him as some test subject!?"

"This is just a game. There's no drugs used at all."

"Of course not, right!? Of course you can't use such things! Newtype is

just a term Zeon's promoting themselves with."

"But this kid has power, a power you and I don't have. This power can clear the curse that's bestowed on the Vist Foundation and show the world the future it should have…"

"Just let the kid who inherited the Vist family's name to do it. It has nothing to do with us."

"I intend to hand the Foundation over to Banagher in the future. If you wish, I can allow you to be registered under the Vist's family name…"

"THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT! I LIKE THE MAN CALLED CARDEAS VIST, AND IF POSSIBLE, I WANTED TO HAVE A KID WITH HIM—THAT WAS ALL! I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE FOUNDATION OR THE VIST FAMILY'S CURSE!"

There's no point talking any further. His mother showed such an expression and sat behind the piano, not to be seen again. The light that vaguely showed revealed a piano no one was playing, and a faint light showed his father's silhouette outside the light. His father's face sank into darkness, and could hardly be seen.

"*…Those bestowed with power will create responsibility that comes with it. This is something I can't choose."*

"So you're working on the order of the god of possibilities… I like the strong you who will back up his words, but I have no intent on offering Banagher as a sacrifice to god."

His father wanted to say something, but did not as he faded into the darkness. Banagher was left in this silent and cold room, and he did not have time to feel uneasy or even cry before he was taken away by somebody else's arms. It was his mother's. To those eyes of the kid, the arms were large and warm. But at the same time, he felt that the arms were relying on him. *Yes, father's no long around. I have to be mother's support—*

"Let's go, Banagher. This isn't the place for us to stay in. I hope that you become an adult who understands the importance of an ordinary life."

After these words were spoken, Banagher suddenly felt difficulty in breathing. *But if this is mother's wish, I'll obey. It's best for me to forget this family and what father taught. That tapestry's the same too, and also everything about father. I'll hide them all deep within my memories.*

I have to protect mother. Father said before that a man has to do this. I

think remembering what father taught me has nothing to do with this…

Banagher left the Vist family's house as he was dragged away by his mother's hands. The sculptures in the garden, the fountains and usually trimmed grass hedges all gradually faded away, and a world that Banagher had never seen before appeared in front of him. It was a world that focused on being 'ordinary', a world where he must not let himself be 'special'. He was likes an obstinate old man. He had to change, but he would not. Even if he had a wish to step forward, he would not move on his own. It felt like a gust of wind blew by, and like he was floating on the oceans, showing an expression that he was not disappointed despite losing half his body in a major injury a few years ago.

That kind of thing has its own fun. That's right, it's just as mother said. Being 'ordinary' will definitely have significance and greatness that comes from being 'ordinary'. But Banagher felt the 'disjoined' feeling in there. For every step he took away from the house, the 'disjointed feeling' felt stronger. *Maybe I forgot something important?* He instinctively stops in his tracks and looks back at the house that seemed to have gone far, far away, and then continue on without thinking. At this moment, Banagher's ankle was grabbed as he immediately knelt down.

Looking back in shock, his father's hand was grabbing onto his ankle. The large and reliable hand of his father—was so icy cold it was scary. He had much more wrinkles, and he was as skinny as bones. The face looked aged, and his hair seemed to have all grayed. What was most shocking was that his father was covered with blood. Cardeas, who laid down on the floor, grabbed onto Banagher's ankle tightly, and the face that was like a dead man was staring at his own son.

"Don't be afraid. Believe in yourself. Do what you feel you have to do."

Cardeas Vist said as his body was partly collapsed as it fused with the floor. Banagher only felt like escaping that hand's grip, but Cardeas just would not let go of his ankle. He originally intended to move further away as he held his mother's hand. Banagher, who thought of shaking the leg that was grabbed and even stamp on him to get away, saw a giant that was standing in place of what was his house.

In that darkness, there was a darkness that was much deeper. The giant figure with the lone horn is staring down at Banagher. The term 'Unicorn' immediately appeared in his mind, and the giant's body suddenly expands as the surface that's cracked open reveals red light that looked like bleeding.

At the same time, the horn of the giant cracks in half as its eyes seems to shine like a demon. Banagher instinctively felt that he's about to be eaten as his body would not listen to him. The fear that rose within him form a voice that roared out from his throat—

Part 5[edit]

The voice that came out from his throat was so hoarse it was surprising, and Banagher Links opened his eyes.

What first entered his eyes is the light panel that's giving off white light. The light panel had a wire fence on the surface. *It doesn't look like furniture an ordinary house will have. It seems that I'm on a certain ship.* On thinking about this, Banagher's head started to move slowly. He remained lying down as he moved his sights.

There was a light antiseptic smell here. The fans seemed to be too loud for an air-conditioner. Most likely, it was the sound of the machines inside the ship making the sounds. From the way the sounds came about, this place was not a space shuttle or a working-class ship. *It's a larger ship—the sound of a large carrier-class ship's engine*

running. As Banagher thought about that “Are you awake?” a voice came from beside him, and a man dressed in white appears in his sights.

One could tell from the slightly tan skin that this man with some moustache was of Arabic descent. Banagher immediately tried to get up, but the man pushed him back onto the bed without hesitation. The small torchlight shines right into Banagher’s eyes, causing his face to frown. "Hm," the man snorted and let go, and Banagher quietly leaned his back on the bed he was lying on.

He could see boxes with medication inside the room and 9 monitors on the wall. There was a treatment table beside the console, and there are documents of medical history. The wall beside the bed had small holes that are like mini tunnels, and they should be for something like CT scans. Banagher stared at his numb hands and notices that he was wearing a gown for patients. He tried to force out a hoarse voice, “May I know…this is?” The man in white continued to write something on the record and answered Banagher’s doubt without looking at him.

“This is the infirmary of the Nahel Argama…can you understand it this way? Anyway, it’s a Federation ship.”

Tossing aside the medical record, the man picked up a canteen and returned to Banagher. Banagher immediately realized that he was in low gravity conditions from the way the water inside the canteen swayed. He received the canteen and seemingly gulped all the water down in one shot.

“I took your wallet to check. Your name’s Banagher Links, a student of Anaheim Electronics Industrial College. Am I right?”

The man, who returned back to the treatment table, pulled out the chair and sat down before asking. “Yes.” Banagher, who could finally make some sound after drinking, answered,

“As we were rushing out of the port, we didn’t have the time to check the data of the colony, so I’ll ask directly. Do you have any past medical history or any allergies to drugs?”

“I guess not…is this ship moving in space?”

“Yeah. We’re still hidden inside the shoal space region. Don’t worry, the enemy won’t come looking for us so quickly.”

From that nonchalant tone, he could tell that the man was already used to such a situation. *Enemies*; Banagher remembered this term that had nothing to do with him. Even though he could vaguely sense

some danger, Banagher showed a relaxed expression and diverted his attention to the canteen that was already empty. He felt that the water was filling his originally parched body, melting away the weight that was built up within his heart. *Why am I so thirsty? How long have I been asleep?* He could not remember anything, and the brain that tried to recall was still not working. Even though he remembered he did have a very bad nightmare, it was just a vague feeling left, melting away gradually together with the weight inside.

Perhaps this might be a dream as well. This is a dream I'm having in the AEIC dorm. Once I wake up, I'll have to be careful not to wake Takuya up and sneak out to work in the morning—speaking of which, I don't know what happened to the people of the Bubbo Company. The 4 winged mobile suit appeared in the Industrial zone. If there's a disaster at the port, the office that had some gasoline stench should be…

Banagher's heart started to beat faster as his temples hurt. He used his hand to touch, and the feeling of the bandage reached his fingertips, causing him to gasp. Perhaps detecting Banagher's current situation, the man asked without looking over, "Does it hurt?" "A little…" Banagher answers. "That's proof that you're still alive. Try and endure it." What he got were such cold words. "The latch that's used to fasten the helmet forced itself on the forehead. Without that, you would have died with your neck snapped."

His heart started to race again, and this time, the sound is so loud that others could hear it. The latch was used to fasten the helmet—that machine that looked like it had an interrogation set attached to the headrest. His head was once held by that thing on both left and right side before pressing onto his forehead. The scene in the past immediately became a bright visual, and the thin layer that covered his memories was ripped apart.

The siren could not stop, and the monitor displayed the words "NT-D". His body was then held down with such force that it felt like his eyeballs were about to explode from the acceleration. Finally, everything was soaked in a very viscous liquid, causing everything in front of his eyes to look like they're in slow-motion…*what happened after that?*

The canteen dropped out from Banagher's hand and onto the floor, letting out a clear sound. *That's right, I was once sitting inside that cockpit, piloting that mobile suit called the "Unicorn" and fighting against the "enemy". Audrey, Cardeas, Takuya, Micott;* several faces and names appeared in his mind. Banagher used his hand to support

his head that felt like exploding soon. The automatic door opened, and a woman's voice could be heard "Excuse me!" before she entered.

"Doctor Hassan, I heard that the kid's awake…" Speaking halfway through, the woman's eyes met Banagher, who lifts his head. "Ah, it's true." The woman's round eyes became even rounder. The Easterner's petite body had a grey shirt and white pants on her. Though one could tell from her attire that it was the Federation Space Forces, the woman herself did not look like a soldier. Once Banagher felt that she was basically a girl around his age, the man called Dr. Hassan turned around and said with a flat tone, "Oh, you're here alone."

"The person himself did indicate that the identity's correct. I've already done the checks you wanted as well. What I investigated using the facilities here show that he's all clean."

Hassan showed a meaningful expression as he concluded and said this to the woman. The woman looked back at his expression and nodded. The grim atmosphere that came with the term check reached Banagher's heart, but he did not have the mind to think too much into it. "Nice to meet you. I'm Ensign Mihiro Oiwakken." She lifted her expression that seemed to be hidden before and greeted with a smile, causing Banagher to blink.

"Welcome to the Nahel Argama…the current situation doesn't make it situation to say this, but are you alright? Banagher Links?"

"Ehh, well…"

"There's a lot of things I would like to ask you, but first, I have to thank you. It's thanks to you piloting the Gundam that we're able to survive."

"Gundam?"

"The machine you piloted. Am I right? The face was hidden thought, and there's only one horn left."

I don't understand at all. I don't even understand what she's asking. Banagher turned towards Hassan, who was facing the desk as the white back did not look like it was going to turn around. "Don't you remember?" Mihiro's head tilted slightly to the side as she glanced at Banagher's eyes.

"I remember sitting in the mobile suit and piloting it. But at that time, my mind was just thinking about making it move…"

Suddenly, a pulsating pain came out from his temples. It was not the pain from the restraint, but a pain from the inside—"Is this kid alright?" Mihiro turned away from Banagher, who was touching his bandages,

as she asked Hassan.

“I still have to do some more important things that will be of burden to him!”

“There’s a slight concussion, so he might feel dizzy. His body doesn’t have any problems. He’s fine, for a “Gundam” pilot.”

Hassan answered with his face tilted aside. Banagher’s confused mind responded to the term “Gundam pilot” as he and Mihiro turned to look at the side of Hassan’s face.

“This isn’t the first time. Every time, the “Gundam”…never mind, you’ll soon understand.”

Hassan waved his hand to divert both their stares away and turned back to the table. Banagher and Mihiro stared at the white profile, glancing at each other from time to time, and an awkward silence soon happened. “Don’t worry too much.” Mihiro forced a smile and said,

“We’ve checked your identity, so just answer the military’s questions later.”

“But the doctor just said that he didn’t have time to check with the colony’s records…”

Banagher saw that Mihiro was taken aback, and regretted somewhat that he just said something unnecessary. Those who knew about such things would have the other party on the ropes—especially in such a place like the army. Perhaps begrudging Hassan for saying too much, Mihiro glared at his back and sighed, gave a wry smile as she admitted to Banagher, “Your friend identified you.” Sensing that Mihiro seemed to be a gentle person, Banagher relaxed somewhat. On the other hand, the term friend causes Banagher -to frown.

“Those people look like they’re from AEIC, so I was wondering if they knew you. Asking asking, they said that they went to the colony builder with you when escaping and separated in the meantime.”

“Takuya and Micott? They’re on this ship too?”

Banagher really couldn’t make any other conclusions. “Do you want to meet them?” On hearing Mihiro follow up with these words, “Of course…!” Banagher answered enthusiastically. Mihiro looks at Hassan and gave him a look of dilemma. Hassan did notturn back as he merely said, “I didn’t hear anything.” Mihiro then shrugged her slender shoulders, lowered her head to stare at Banagher, and said, “Alright.”

“Just a little though. There’ll be a lot of high-ranking uncles coming over to ask you questions. Understand?”

Mihiro gave a stiff smile, which somehow indicated the seriousness of this situation. Realizing that he was in a troublesome situation, Banagher cautiously got off the bed and stepped on the floor barefooted for the first time. It felt eerily cold.

Part 6[edit]

‘Banagher. Banagher.’

The moment the door opened, the basketball-sized ball leapt over. “Haro!” Banagher answered as he hurriedly caught that thing.

Haro flapped its ear-like round discs as it remained in Banagher’s clutches, asking in a synthesized voice, ‘Are you alright? Are you alright?’ “Of course.” Banagher answered as he turned Haro upside down to check. Even though there’s a bit of soot, the surface that was covered by a layer of rubber did not show any signs of scars. After scarring in a relieved manner, “Banagher!” “You’re still alive!” The familiar voices entered Banagher’s ears, and he frantically looked around the room that was 10m wide.

At a corner of the recreational room for officers, which had vending machines, plants, and several simple tables and chairs, Banagher found the owners of the voices. Standing up from the sofa and looking over with a blank expression was Micott Bartsch. Takuya ignored the NCO who looked like he was in charge of watching over them as he dashed over. As he saw their faces, Banagher could not hold back the emotions swelling in him as he answered, “I thought you guys were…!” the words remained in his throat as he stamped the floor and caught Takuya who was flying over.

Micott then caught up to them and hugged them. The trio were all bundled up and floating in the air due to inertia. Mihiro stands beside them and stops the NCO who was trying to stop them, giving a wry look. Banagher uses his body to embrace the warmth of his friends. This warmth, this is reality—even if the ‘disjointed feeling’, he would not feel shaken. This was the warmth that showed that he belonged to this world. The skin that was tense due to the cold was warmed up, and Banagher enjoyed the comfort that came with the hugs. *This is where I should be in.* His heart was filled with such thoughts. *I’m not going to ride on the mobile suit again; I’m not going to get involved with the Vist Foundation and Neo Zeon. The day I got involved in nightmares has ended…*

It had been about a mere 2, 3 seconds in the air. The moment they slammed into the wall, the trio was grabbed by the gravity they once left as they collapsed onto the sofa “It hurts!” “Gyah!” All sorts of cries could be heard. And then, it was unknown who started laughing first as the room is then filled with the trio’s laughter. Takuya and Micott only had some light scratches on their legs and arms, and it looked like they did not get injuries that were too severe. Both of them look a lot livelier than the last time they met, and it seemed that they bathed and washed off the sweat and dirt on them. After looking at both of them, Banagher repeated it again, “It’s great to know that you two are fine…” “Of course not.” Takuya clenched his fist loosely and jabbed it into Banagher’s stomach, grumbling unhappily,

“We had it rough. We were shaken about by the mobile suit’s hand, moving all around the battlefield. I really don’t know what you were doing that time.”

“I was really worried about you, seriously. I heard that you were kept in the ship with us, Banagher, but they wouldn’t let us see you. Is the injury on your head fine? They said that you never regained consciousness…”

Micott wanted to touch the bandage on Banagher’s head but was blocked by his hand. As Banagher wants to tell her that it was not too serious, a light Banagher saw before came from opposite the table, behind Mihiro and the NCO, causing him to gasp.

Emerald eyes. The eyes that declared that everything had changed. The eyes that were gleaming intensely were in the same room as her. That person was staring at him while looking like she was hiding behind the NCO. Immediately, Banagher was not looking at other people as he stands up from the sofa.

“Audrey!”

Her shoulders jerk and the emerald eyes widen slightly. Banagher did not care as he steps on the floor, and as he was about to fall, he passes by Mihiro and the NCO.

That’s right. It was Audrey Burne. The chestnut-colored hair, clear white skin and long legs with jeans on were the same as yesterday. He feels a burning sensation climbing out from deep within him—it was not warmth, but something much stronger. The heat caused Banagher’s body to become anxious and made him move to those emerald eyes. For some reason, the first words Banagher said were “I didn’t expect you to be on this ship too…!” On hearing this, Audrey diverted her gaze to the floor.

“Ehh…things ended up like this.”

Looking over, Audrey turned her stare behind Banagher’s shoulders. Banagher realized that Audrey was staring at Takuya and Micott, and the heat inside him subsides.

The two of them know Audrey. They know that Audrey, who looks like she’s part of the anti-Federation forces, snuck into Industrial 7 yesterday, met the Vist Foundation—and definitely has something to do with the battle last night. Banagher, not anybody else, was the only one who told them these. As Banagher thought about this, it was too late by the time he took a step back from Audrey. “So you’re the Audrey Banagher mentioned before.” The stinging words came from behind, causing Banagher to turn around.

The one who spoke was Micott. The bone-chilling stare passed by Banagher as it landed on Audrey alone. Banagher noticed at Micott was staring over at him with a suspicious stare at well and got in front of Audrey.

“Who are you? Why did you come over to Industrial 7?”

Perhaps Micott was wary of the NCO’s stare as she never asked Audrey so directly. Mihiro interrupted Micott, who let out stinging words after being unrestrained, saying, “Oh my, aren't the four of you friends?” Banagher clenched his sweating fists tight as such a situation developed right in front of the one person he did not want knowing what was going on — the Federation officer. As Banagher could not think of any words to break the deadlock, he subconsciously raised his arms to protect Audrey…“She just moved into Industrial 7 yesterday,” another voice rang inside the room.

“She’s Banagher’s childhood friend, and she’s supposed to transfer over to our school, right?”

Takuya gave a look, but Banagher could not catch up for that moment as he vaguely answered, “Eh? Ahh…”

“Hm? Is that so?” Mihiro asked. Before Micott could show a doubtful look, Takuya patted her on the back and said, “You’re worrying too much, Micott.”

“Even if there are friends who suddenly come by for an hour, Banagher probably won't look at any girl other than you, right?”

Even Banagher was dumbstruck by these words as his mouth gaped open. Mihiro let out an understanding expression as she nodded away, while Micott, who was left behind, immediately went red. *You said too*

much! What if she gets angry!? Banagher was worried as he could not help but close his eyes. “What are you saying!? What I mean is…!” Micott’s enraged voice rang, and the helpless Banagher had to endure this—

“Is Banagher Links around?”

A sharp voice suddenly interrupted them. Banagher looked over at where the voice came from, and he saw two men walking through the door of the recreation room.

One of the men was tall and burly, had short hair, and had a physique of a wrestler, and the other was a man with sharp attention and ferocity all over him. Both of them were also wearing Federation uniform, but the presence they gave off was obviously different from the other passengers. If the other soldiers were wooden sticks, these two were metal bats. The man with the sharp expression alone may even be described as being like a sharp knife.

Banagher met that knife in the eyes, and as Mihiro and the NCO remained still, those two walked over without much thought. Even with a cast on one of the men’s left arm, the footsteps were not showing any signs of faltering. The sharp stare scanned Banagher from the head to the fingernails, and the body that resembles a giant cat species arrived in front of Banagher. Banagher tried his best not to look away as he stared straight at the man’s face. The man’s stare remained still, asking without any emotion on his face, “Is this the boy?”

“Yes, Commander Daguza.” Mihiro answered. The man looks away from Banagher and immediately questions Mihiro, “I did say before to immediately bring him to me once he’s awake, right?”

“I was the one who let him meet the refugees who were detained. That’s because I heard that they were schoolmates.”

Mihiro gave a bold expression that did not match her babyface as she never looks at the men. Her attitude shows that she had some contempt for the men. However, the man called Daguza did not seem to mind as he looks down at Banagher, telling him “You, follow me” before turning away. The tone that did not allow for any objection caused Banagher to step forward before he could even think.

“Wait a second…! You’re saying that you’re taking him? To where?”

“Banagher’s like us! He managed to escape to this ship!”

Takuya and Micott then added in, causing Banagher to stop

immediately. Daguza turned back and glanced at them, and said with an unwavering tone, “That’s for us to decide.”

“Aren’t you being too bossy here!? Besides, when are you going to send us back to Industrial 7!?”

“The ship’s in a precarious situation. I can’t make any guarantees.”

“My father Fabio Bartsch is the factory owner of Industrial 7’s Third Workzone. If you’re only going to take Banagher away, please state the reason first.”

Micott knew that most adults will change their attitude after hearing these words, but this time, the outcome was not what she desired as Daguza stared at Micott and said solemnly,

“He piloted a military mobile suit as a civilian and entered the battlefield. This heavy crime alone is enough to warrant capital punishment.”

“Military mobile suit…?” “You’re the one who piloted it?” Takuya and Micott let out their shocked voices respectively. Banagher saw that Mihiro seems to be begrudging Daguza for saying too much as she glared at the side of his face. His eyes started to move around. “Banagher, don’t tell me you…” A soft voice came from behind, causing Banagher to be so shocked his eyebrows twitch.

Audrey, who instinctively reached her hand out for Banagher’s shoulder before taking it back immediately, was showing signs of faltering in her expression. Banagher recalls that everything changed the moment he saw these eyes. *Me, Audrey, and maybe even including Takuya and Micott may have taken on a path of no return.* Banagher harbored such a thought that might be instinctive and answers, “I’ll tell you later.”

“Wait here for me, alright?”

Don’t tell anyone else. Banagher said this to Audrey with his eyes. Audrey backs away, showing a silent stare at Banagher. Banagher felt the warmth that spread when his shoulder was touched, and followed Daguza out of the recreation room. Mihiro looks like she was saying “Don’t worry”, and the hand that was patted on Banagher’s shoulder gave him the strength to walk forward with his head held high.

Part 7[edit]

The high pitched siren rang inside the helmets through the wireless communicator. This summoning siren for the Marines sounded exceptionally pitiful here as it brought about a lonely presence, ringing

through Riddhe Marcenas' ears.

Soon after, a rumbling could be felt under his feet, and the large catapult gate was closed. The gates that closed in from top and bottom sealed off the catapult that was 20m on all sides, hiding the large catapult that was floating upright in the vacuum. During this time, before the hatch closed completely, Riddhe and the rest were lined up in front of the catapult, raising their hands to salute. The catapult hatch for landing was still open as they awaited the machines that had not returned…but no matter how much they waited, the people who did not come back would never come back. It had been more than half a day since the battle people would record as 'Battle Of Industrial 7' in the future happened, and the Nahel Argama was headed to a new situation. Riddhe and the rest remembered the people who passed away, and had to take their next steps forward. The souls of the pilots who died in this battle should had returned home—

<So everyone wasn't able to make it…>

Lieutenant Commander Norm Basililock muttered as the thick gates closed up and the warning lights flashed, indicating that pressure was moving in. He once requested the superiors to keep the gate open even after 12 hours, and after the 17th hour, the mobile suit squadron leader whose attitude softened might still be able to see the remains of his subordinates floating in the vacuum. Riddhe turned to look at Norm, but he could not see the expression on Norm's face as it was covered by the visor. Riddhe could not say anything as he could only mix around the troops after the squadron was dismissed, and went down one airlock after another inside the ship.

Riddhe removed his helmet and hung it on the hook behind him, walking down the mobile suit deck that already had air. He sees that most of the mobile suits were not back inside the hangar as the silent metal wall just remained there, feeling thoroughly dejected. There were 5 "ReZELs" that were definitely destroyed, and 3 "Jegans" as well. ECOAS also lost what looked like a tank, and the remaining one was lying in a corner of the hangar under a canvas. There were 3 confirmed survivors, and one of them had only minor injuries while the other two were lying inside the ship's intensive care room for treatment, so there's no hope of them return back to the front lines. The mobile suit deck that had already lost 2-thirds of their fighting strength had a relaxed presence of air inside. The sounds of cranes moving and welding caused the melancholy of lights fading to be even more acute.

"Deborah, Nazal, and even Commander Ian…that's quite the heavy

loss.”

“Leaving aside the R003 Romeo that was ambushed, the other 7 units were all taken down by the same machine, right? And we let that guy get away.”

“That’s two-thirds, two-thirds! How are we going to regroup with so many units taken down? Even if we count in the spare “Jegan”, there are only 5 mobile suits we can use! We can’t even form a squad!”

“We can only wait for reinforcements. In this situation, we can’t even hang on if that four-winged of the Sleeves attacks again.”

“I still haven’t massacred that J4 Juliet ReZEL guy who beat me in poker…”

As there was no loud chatter like usual, the conversation between the mechanics became extremely shrill. Riddhe subconsciously clenched his fists and floated by the mechanical frames that were lined up in such a way that it looked like they were tombstones. *Stop blaming us all the time,* Riddhe grumbled deep inside his heart. *It’s not that the cowards survived or the brave soldiers died. What separates these people is just luck. When the death god swings its large scythe, a slight difference of whether we’re standing or sitting will decide the outcome. In this situation, no matter whether it’s experience, ability or courage, none of them have any help.*

Death just came by so simply, causing the people who survived to feel lost. Though Riddhe had thoughts of taking revenge for his allies, that sort of feeling was like taking a gamble. Maybe it was just an instinct, the only way for him to feel at ease. To Riddhe, things like hatred for the enemy and regret had become really alien to him. To put it directly, he lamented not being able to feel regret. Riddhe felt angry over being so inexperienced that he doesn’t know what to do with his body that was still alive. *Sooner or later, I might have to use the memories of the people who have died as part of dishes—*

As he thought unhappily, the voices of the people were further away. Before he realized it, Riddhe was already right in front of his own machine that was being maintained. The machine itself was covered in soot, and the NAR-008 that was spray painted on it had become unidentifiable, but the machine itself was not significantly damaged anywhere. Riddhe looked up at the “ReZEL” that did not have any signs of a graze from the beam rifle and realized that he did not do anything. He took the cable gun and pulled himself to the cockpit. Several cables extended out from the opened cockpit, making it hard to identify the back of Mechanical Officer Jonas Gibney who was

working inside.

The tall and burly body was bent as he was holding the keyboard that was attached to the display board. The back profile looked like it was crying, and Riddhe gasped slightly. The old timer NCOs had completely different views from rookies who were assigned here like him, and they seemed to have a passion-like will when being on this ship. They just went through an official battle for the first time since being on active duty again, and this battle took many lives too. Having experienced this again, Gibney might have been hurt more than anyone else. Riddhe was unable to think of what to say as he let out a call, “Mechanic officer…” and that thick body turn around with a glare of killing intent right on him.

“DAMN YOU! YOU EVEN DARED TO BRING SUCH A TOY ONTO THE BATTLEFIELD!?”

His savage face looked a lot more heinous than usual as he tossed the hand-sized plane model right at him—that was the model Riddhe brought into the cockpit before the battle and forgot that it was inside—“Ah, no, that is…” the voice that was let out was stuck inside the throat, and Riddhe backed his body as he floated back. “WHAT IS THAT!?” Gibney continued to glare at him as he moved out, and the large body was standing right in front of the cockpit’s hatch.

“It’s because you took this thing out with the attitude of going to a picnic that we got massacred by the Zeon remnants!”

Gibney opened his legs and forcefully stepped on the cockpit hatch, kicking Riddhe out. Riddhe could not do anything as he floated around in zero gravity, his back crashing into the hook-shaped armor that was extended out from the “ReZEL”s crotch. The surrounding mechanics were all shocked as they looked at both of them, only to show a ‘here we go again’ look as they turned back. Riddhe quickly stood up, glared at Gibney and yelled, “YOU’RE JUST USING THIS AS AN EXCUSE TO VENT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS OUT!”

“I FOUGHT HARD IN THE BATTLE AS WELL! DON’T VENT YOUR FRUSTRATION ON ME!”

“IT’S POINTLESS IF YOU DON’T SHOW ANYTHING! JUST TAKE THIS AWAY AND PLAY!”

Gibney threw over the plane model and snorted. Riddhe did not look at his face as he merely stared at the little biplane flying over his head before kicking the armor besides his feet instinctively.

Riddhe felt that it was stupid to think about this, yet he also thought

that it was less depressing this way as he feels motivated all of a sudden as he started to chase the plane that was moving through the deck in a dreamlike state. Perhaps it was because the original design was suitable for aerodynamics as the biplane model's wings easily passed through the air, flying to the wall on the opposite side without slowing down. The biplane moved through the narrow spaces between the cranes, reached the narrow catwalk at the wall, and flew into the crowd working on it.

A person moving through dodged it and used his hand to grab the biplane that suddenly flew over. Riddhe was a step slower in reaching the handrail of the catwalk, and was surprised by the side of the face of the person who was not wearing the uniform. He was wearing a deep blue jumper and jeans, and had slightly long ash-brown hair. His face was smaller than the man who was walking in front of him by a size, and one could possibly call him a teenager—

"Ah, sorry."

"No…that was nicely done."

The boy handed over the biplane he caught as his mouth relaxed, staring over at Riddhe. Those eyes had no hidden intent in them, but they were rather strong-willed. There was a sharp glint in his eyes, one that did not match his obedient looking appearance. Riddhe stared at those eyes that were giving off some mysterious pulling force, and was confused by some form of fluttering in his heart, but looked up once he noticed the other stares around him. Commander Daguza Mackle, who was walking in front, glanced over at Riddhe without any expression.

Riddhe immediately saluted and moved away from them. The boy's face was soon blocked by the adults as he walked into a place that could not be seen. *If he were a refugee that's being moved…it's overly cautious to surround a boy with a gang of people. What's most suspicious is that even the Manhunters are amongst them.* Riddhe watched the group of around 10 people walk by, and finally found a familiar face at the end. He moved over to that person, a rookie who was assigned to the security force at the same time Riddhe was assigned here.

The security troop had a sling on his usual secondary uniform, and his head had an anti-round helmet with a white line drawn on it. Riddhe went over to greet him, and brought his face closer to whisper, "Who is that guy?" he pointed at the boy with his chin, and the peer answered softly, "The brat who piloted the 'Gundam' just now."

"It's him…!? He's still a kid."

"Didn't I say it before? I heard that they're going to carry out tests on him later."

The Gundam-type mobile suit who forced the 'Sleeves' four-winged to retreat with its overwhelming power and this boy walking in front of him who looks like a kid; Riddhe never thought of linking these two thoughts as he can only remain still. During this time, the group of people had already walked all the way to the front, and the peer kicked the floor hard to catch up. Riddhe followed suit and moved beside the peer.

"What now?"

"Aren't you going to the "Gundam"? I heard it even got a solid shield and rifle. I want to look too…"

"No no, outsiders are not allowed. The guys from Anaheim and the Manhunters are already arguing loudly over the rights, so it's already boiling point here."

"They're the outsiders."

“It’s pointless to tell me that now.”

Move on move on. Riddhe was chased away by his peer as he could only stop unwillingly. The group got on the lift at the end of the catwalk, and the peer who followed in at the end was in charge of closing the lift. For an instant, Riddhe’s eyes meet the boy’s eyes, but he did not have the time to check his impression on the boy. The door that was closed cut off the boy’s stare as the lift moved to the lower deck.

Below the mobile suit deck, there was a mechanic deck that was also called the factory inside the ship. This was a place that was used when a machine needed a change of parts or that there needs to be a large-scale repair. The Gundam-type mobile suit that was taken in was kept inside here—or to put it correctly, if it was the same as when it was taken in, it should be the one-horned mobile suit that did not look like a “Gundam”. The enraged Riddhe kicked the elevator door and used the recoil to bounce back, grabbing the airlock that was installed inside the ship. *Everyone looks really tense now, so can’t you understand other people’s feelings now?* Riddhe grumbled some meaningless rants about others in his mind and left the mobile suit deck.

Part 8[edit]

Since the standby order was already issued, Riddhe could not go back to his own room to relax. He hid the biplane model inside his helmet and walked towards the pilot waiting room.

At this point, the standby unit and mechanics were all mobilized, and the Nahel Argama couldn’t maintain its original formation. Riddhe could only stay in the empty waiting room together with the members who survived as he put on the normal suit and moved through the dull space in front of him. He looked rather irritated as he moved around while holding the lift-grip. Once he arrived in front of a cross-junction, a familiar profile move right in front of Riddhe, causing his heart to beat faster.

Chestnut-colored hair, clear white slender face, and the purple cape that was puffed with air inside; that’s right. Riddhe quickly adjusted the speed of the lift-grip as he called out, “Wait, you’re…!” He let go of the lift-grip right in front of the cross junction and kicked the wall at the end to eliminate inertia. The girl showed a surprised look on her face as Riddhe turned 90 degrees to look at her.

“So it’s you. Are you hurt? I was worried just now, but I didn’t have time to ask…”

The girl with the floating cape stopped at where she was as she stares

at Riddhe. The emerald eyes show a form of willfulness…or rather, it might be appropriate to call it tension. Riddhe himself tensed up as he saw the beautiful side of the girl's face and eyes through the monitor when the Magallanica was in utter chaos. *It's because I saw this face that I could respond without fear.* As he made such a baseless belief, Riddhe politely smiles and said, "Ah, I was wearing this helmet just now, so you might not be able to identify me."

"I was the mobile suit pilot who brought you guys here."

Ahh. The girl looked like she was trying to recall. "I'm Riddhe Marcenas. What about you?" he continued. "…Audrey Burne." The girl let out the voice from her lips. Her emerald eyes looked down to the floor, and the slender prideful face had lost some of its luster. The carefree look from before was gone as the girl let out an awkward presence while she looked away, causing Riddhe to be unable to comprehend. *Maybe she's an unexpectedly shy girl?* He wondered. As he harboured such a thought was completely wrong, Riddhe looked down at the side of this girl's face again, and immediately, "AREN'T YOU TREATING HIM AS A CRIMINAL!?" another voice rang throughout the passage.

At the end of the passage, right at the entrance of the door leading to the machine adjustment room, Riddhe saw a black-haired girl with her eyebrows curling up. "You must be mistaken about Banagher piloting the "Gundam"." and then, the one who spoke up next was an Easterner boy who looked to be of the same age as the girl. They were both staring at the female officer in front of them. If she was not wearing a uniform, she would most likely be mistaken for being of the same age as them with the baby-like face of hers. It was Mihiro Oiwakken.

"But it's a fact that he sat in the cockpit. Is there any other reason why the "Gundam" could move?"

Mihiro was not aware of Riddhe's group standing on the other end of the corridor as she looked really flustered while trying to comfort them. He felt somewhat surprised the moment he heard the term "Gundam" in such an unexpected place, and said to the girl, "Erm, they brought you along too, right?" the girl who called herself Audrey looks up and simply nodded.

"You know that brat…that "Gundam" pilot?"

"Yeah…"

What's going on? Riddhe vaguely answers 'Fuun', recalls the

appearance of the boy that was taken away by the Manhunters, and immediately thinks of an idea. He curls his lips up, smiles and whispers to Audrey, if you're so worried, do you want to see him?"

"Eh?" Audrey lifted her face. As she gave him a weird stare, Riddhe turned his back on her and walks towards Mihiro. *This might be able to clear the vagueness inside. Besides, it's a pilot's job to remain motivated when on standby. If nobody's going to comfort me, I'm going to do it myself.* Riddhe spent less than a second fooling himself completely as he stared at Mihiro and company, and raised his index finger in a way resembling old-Eastern children playing,

"Those who want to see the "Gundam", please gather here—"

Part 9[edit]

The monitor panel seam let out a green light, forming a layer of laser in the air as it scanned the body. The display board showed the mapping data of the capillaries until the <IDENTIFIED> word appeared on it, and the activation sound of the main engine rang throughout the cockpit.

The monitor panel started to run, and the all-view monitor appeared in front of the linear seat. At this moment, it showed the vision of the eyes of the 20m tall giant. It's the enclosed space surrounded the walls. The mechanic deck that was not even half the size of the mobile suit deck had two sets of mechanic hangars for minor repairs. One of the hangar sets had a Jegan unit with the armor removed, and facing it on the opposite side was the "Unicorn", surrounded by many people under zero gravity. This mobile suit had unique specs, had the cockpit at the abdomen, and had a lone horn pointing out at the top.

Commander Daguza was standing on the other side of the opened cockpit door, and behind him was the guard with his hand on a pistol at his waist, getting ready and showing no signs of relaxing at all. The sounds of the shutters start to echo, and Banagher just felt that it was unbearable to be inside. He lowered his head and hoped for everything to end here. The reason why he did not want to remain so long in such a place was because this place still had the bloody smell of that person —

"That really shocked me. We couldn't activate it no matter what we did just now!"

The mechanic who poked his head into the cockpit, watching the inside of the cockpit said. There were many people of different affiliations taking part in the live examination of the "Unicorn"; people

dressed in army uniforms and people dressed in suits. Those dressed in uniforms could even be divided into two groups; the members of this ship and the strong men Daguza was leading—seeing how muscular his arms were, this mechanic should be Daguza's man. Banagher peered at the head of this mechanic who was inspecting the display board, and was about to ask whether he could leave. "Don't you know that this mobile suit can only be activated through biometric inspection?" On hearing the unfriendly words, Banagher lifted his head.

The one who spoke was the leader of the people in suits, and it seemed that his name was called Alberto. That fat body was floating in the air, looking over Daguza's shoulder and staring at the machine. The mild colored-styled suit looked very similar to the suit Cardeas used to wear. However, Alberto did not have the mark of the unicorn on it, and he looked to be rather hot as the collar was all messed up while under the blob of flesh on the chin. Banagher thought that it was a special suit designed for the Vist Foundation, but perhaps that might be the latest trend or something?

The mechanic gave an annoyed look. Alberto simply looked away, pretending not to see, "That sort of thing can be removed immediately once we send it back to Anaheim." he said. "It looks hard." This line interrupted Alberto's snort. "What!?" Alberto glared at the subordinate standing on the "Unicorn" head.

"This is already programmed deep into the OS. If we randomly reformat it, we might end up deleting that Laplace Program totally."

The subordinate answered without even paying attention to the situation, causing a speechless Alberto's face to look like a compressed meatball. As he stared at that face, Banagher had a feeling that they met before. However, this feeling merely lasted until Daguza entered the cockpit.

"You entered the cockpit to look for a spacesuit. Cardeas Vist then appeared in front of you and registered you as the pilot of the "Unicorn". That's how it went, am I right?"

Daguza bent over as he brought his face near the seat, giving a sharp look. "Yes." Banagher answered him with a stiff voice.

"You've never met Cardeas Vist before this, right?"

"…Yes."

"It's only the first time you met. How did you know he's Cardeas?"

“I just said it already. I saw his photo on the AEIC introduction pamphlet, or something like that.”

Banagher lifted his head and answered as he stared right at the other person’s eyes, whose stern stare caused Banagher to look away. *Pull yourself through.* He clenched his sweaty hands as he told himself this. *I can’t say the truth that easily. I still haven’t understood the situation yet. If I say anything random, Audrey will be deemed suspicious as well. He’s a military man, and a man with such sharp knife-like stare, but it’s not like I can’t hide anything from him. Besides, I have something advantageous to me.*

Even Banagher himself could not accept the truth that just felt surreal to him. *Lying about this should be useful.* Banagher kept quiet and turned his face to the front. Daguza sighed “Your words are really hard to accept.” He said as he looked away.

“He left everything to a person he met for the first time…and to a boy like you to boot.”

Will you accept this if I say that Cardeas’ my father? Banagher muttered deep inside his heart. *Will you not admit this even in such a case?* As he mocked himself for this, Banagher felt a chill from the words he heard next, “That man has always been a weirdo.” Alberto said this as he stood beside the cockpit.

“If that wasn’t the case, there wouldn’t be so much controversy, right?” he continued, and glanced into the room. Ever since they first met, Alberto would shoot looks of heinous ill intent at Banagher whenever he had the chance, and this time, it was already on the verge of hatred. That hatred was now all over Banagher, causing him to unwittingly swallow his saliva.

“One-man show. Tyrannical. He said that he was doing it for the sake of the Foundation, yet it was just for his own satisfaction. It’s really nice enough to call him a rogue. Simply put, he’s just a man so lonely that he couldn’t trust others. He probably want to create one more hassle for us by handing the “Unicorn” to this boy, or he lost his sanity on the brink on death…”

“He was still sane at that time! He clearly told me to use this to protect everyone!”

Banagher stared at the side of Alberto’s face, realizing that Alberto had finished speaking and that he was the one who spoke up. Alberto looked stunned while Daguza turned his sharp stare over. Thinking that this was bad, Banagher could not restrain the hot sensation rising

from his throat to his nostrils, and he simply said out what was left of what he wanted to say,

“That’s not something that somebody who doesn’t trusts others will say. Were such words only said because he has no one around him whom he could trust, huh?”

Why am I arguing about this? What am I angry about? Just as Banagher himself did not seem to understand what was going on, Alberto, whose expression immediately changed drastically, reached for the cockpit cover and let his hand reach in from outside. He grabbed Banagher’s chest and showed a menacing look, saying, “Saying it like you understand really well, huh!?” even though he was right in his sights, Banagher gritted his teeth and never looked away.

“You’re saying this because you don't know what sort of situation you’re in now, right? In certain situations, even kids will have to go to jail.”

“Of course I don’t know…! But I do know common sense like ‘talking behind other people’s backs when they’re dead isn’t right’. You’re an adult, and you don’t even feel embarrassed by this?”

Alberto gasped, and his nostrils expanded as the hand that was on his chest showed signs of tightening. Banagher grited his teeth, and at this moment, “Stop it.” Daguza roared and quickly reached his hand out to grab Alberto’s wrist, which Banagher saw,

“You’re being too carried away here. You too, Banagher. Those aren’t words a child should be saying.”

Daguza said as he simply twisted the wrists to restrain Alberto completely. Banagher swallowed the retort he was about to say and turned around. “I GOT IT! JUST LET GO OF ME!” Alberto roared at Daguza as he left the cockpit while looking like he was flying forward.

“It’s a waste of time to do this. The “Unicorn” will be sent over to Anaheim on the moon for investigations. Before that, seal it, SEAL IT ALL!”

“This is a Federation’s ship. You don’t have the authority to order…”

“I can get it if there’s a need. I’ll go to the Prime Minister or the Chief Senator to give the order. Oi! Don’t randomly take photos there!”

Alberto rubbed the wrist that was just twisted and lashed out at the mechanic who was about to take photos with his camera. At this moment, his foot that was on the cockpit cover slid off. Alberto frantically tried to reach the cockpit cover with his hands, and missed

as his body slipped towards the mechanic deck in a confused manner. Nobody was at the area he was falling to; only a “Jegan” frame with exposed moveable frames. *If he accidentally crashes into there, he might be electrocuted.* Realizing this, Banagher immediately grabbed onto the control stick.

With the sound of the actuators being activated, the “Unicorn” slowly raises its right arm. “Oi!?” “It moved!” Banagher ignored the people creating the ruckus as he used the mechanical arm of the “Unicorn” to grab Alberto. He gently gripped onto the control stick that could move with his fingers, and the “Unicorn”s palm easily grabs Alberto who was floating due to the recoil. Everything should be fine as he had checked that there was no one around the arm’s movement range.

Everyone turns their backs on the giant hand holding onto Alberto and diverted their stares into the cockpit. Banagher brought his hand away from the control stick and tried not to look at any of their faces. “Did you do that?” Daguza asked while standing beside him, and Banagher did not look back at him as he said “Yes.”

“That’s not easy. It’s impossible for me to imagine that you piloted a mobile suit for the first time.”

“That’s because piloting mini mobile suits is part of the vocation courses.”

No matter how the opponent tried to probe, even Banagher himself did not know how to explain this. Banagher was regretting that he again provided information that would allow room for Daguza to suspect, but Daguza himself simply gives a wry smile and said “This must be a so-called Newtype” and nothing else. Alberto, who was yelping away, “HURRY UP AND LET ME GO!” as he tried to struggle out of the giant’s hand, was looking at this unnerving silence.

“Don’t crush him.”

“I know.”

“Or else it’ll be hard to clean up later.”

Daguza removed the slight bitter smile on his face and said without a smile. In response, Banagher frowned and answered, “Yeah.”

Part 10[edit]

“That’s the “Gundam”?”

“Looks like it…it looks completely different.”

Takuya answered to Micott, who was carrying Haro, as he scratched his head with an inexplicable look. Audrey deliberately brought her neck closer over their shoulders to check the situation on the mechanic deck.

There had to be at least 30m from the open space here on the ceiling down to the bottom, and inside it, they could see the white mobile suit being held up by the mechanical hangar. The lone horn looked exceptionally eye-catching amongst the long line of Federation-styled humanoid machines. That was the “Unicorn Gundam”.

The so-called guide to Laplace Box Cardeas Vist designated—just had to be taken by the Federation army. Audrey muttered, but thinks, *If that were the case, I’m the same as well.* Audrey sighed without Micott and the rest noticing as she diverted her gaze again at her own face and the two Federation soldiers, who were reflected off the airtight window, and she had to sigh at this nightmare that had become reality.

Mihiro Oiwakken had no reason to realize Audrey’s thoughts as she looked around the dark room while looking rather jumpy. As for Riddhe Marcenas, his face was not at the window, but that expression of his looked like a child who was allowed to do anything he wanted. Though he said that it was for Micott and the others to calm down, it was just an excuse to get Mihiro’s permission; the one who really wanted to see the “Unicorn’ should be Riddhe himself. Riddhe led everyone to this crane control room, and truly, they could see everything clearly inside. Even though they could not see the cockpit, they can see the appearance of the “Unicorn” completely from above, even the people investigating the machine. *What’s with that lapse in security after forbidding outsiders from entering?* Audrey wondered. *Is it because they haven’t had an agreed view on what to do with the “Unicorn”? Or is the Federation itself like this?*

“As expected of a pilot to really knows the layout of the ship.”

Takuya lifted his head from the side of the window as he said that, and it seemed that he was not having the same kind of doubt as Audrey. “Kinda.” Riddhe, who was praised, answered as he looked like he was not completely unhappy.

“For me…no, I myself hope to become a test pilot for Anaheim. I hope that once I graduate, I can join the army’s teaching squad once I graduate, so I’ve been working hard at the school. I feel really honoured to be able to talk to a real pilot!”

“Wait a sec, Takuya. Now’s not the time to talk about such things, right?” Micott said. “It’s alright. It’s a rare chance anyway!” Takuya

enthusiastically said as he showed an admiring expression at Riddhe as if he were a superstar. In response, Riddhe tried to act cool as he waved his arm,

“If you’re willing to become a pilot, it’s nice that you know how to seize opportunities. I’ll let you see my machine later.”

“Really!? Your mobile suit is the Zeta-series transformable-type machine right, Ensign? This year’s equipment yearbook has the photos of the testing, and the idea of it becoming a support flight system for the “Jegan” is really…”

Riddhe seemed to be overwhelmed by Takuya’s ravaging explosion of knowledge as his responses seemed to be vague while smiling stiffly. Micott, who seemed to have gotten used to it, had not been paying attention to it right from the beginning. In the end, Takuya even starts to describe and rattle away to Haro. Mihiro left Takuya as she moved behind Riddhe to whisper, “Is this good?” “It’s alright, I suppose.” Riddhe looked rather calm as he answered.

“It’s not good to not treasure a youth’s dreams.”

“You’re still saying such random stuff again. Besides, shouldn’t you be on standby? Don’t blame me when you get scolded after coming to such a place on your own.”

“Don’t be so strict. My mood will worsen in the waiting room when the atmosphere’s so tense. The enemy won’t come after us immediately.”

Audrey heard both of them whispering to each other, and started to doubt, *Is this really a conversation between soldiers? Is the atmosphere floating in here really one that a battleship involved in real battles should have?* Enduring her sighs, she looked outside the window. *There is basically no sense of tension, and they’re very different from my own people. This isn’t a question of morale, but that they have a luxury of composure.*

Even with half the forces depleted, there’s a way as long as they can hang on through this. They had the luxury to think of such things. There might be a chance if they get reinforcements. Such a decisive composure is something my own camp doesn’t have—no, we never had since the One Year War. Zeon never had any composure when they were fighting against the Earth Federation that had around 100 times the political power. What was lost will never return, and if they failed then, there wouldn’t be a next time. That’s because everyone had been fighting, bleeding and blown to bits in the vacuum space because of the many constraints.

This is probably the difference between being at ease and being uneasy…I say. Both sides' thoughts are already so different, right down to the basics. There's nothing that will raise hatred or envy already, and even I feel that the principle of my side is pointless. Through this experience that she could not understand without seeing things personally, Audrey realized that she had lots to see, and again realized that she will be in danger if she continued to stay here. She had no confidence that she could remain so calm and natural in such a presence. Even though she was not talking now, that girl called Micott was obviously showing signs of doubt on her. *I have to find a way to escape the ship before exposing myself—*

"Then, your friend's called Banagher, right? What kind of person is he?"

Perhaps sick and tired of seeing the seeing the mechanic deck that did not have anything going on, Riddhe spoke up and asked the question. Audrey interrupted her thoughts and looked at him. "If you ask me what kind of person he is…I'd have to say he's nothing special, right?" Takuya sounded puzzled as he responed, and Micott shrugged,

"He's a quiet ordinary boy. I really can't imagine him riding on that mobile suit and going into battle."

"But it's a fact that he sent the enemy packing!"

"Even if you say that…Banagher did feel different before the raid."

"Yeah. Maybe he became really motivated? He always looked lazy."

Speaking of which, Audrey was somewhat bothered as well. The Banagher she met in the recreation room did really have a completely different presence from before. Even though his appearance and voice were all the same, the pressurizing feeling he gave felt stronger—to put it, his presence felt heavier.

What happened to that person who touched my hand as he held me close? What caused him to end up piloting the "Unicorn"? "But he managed to win because of the capabilities of the machine, right? Besides, that's a "Gundam"!" Audrey, who again looked around the mechanic deck, was shocked by the voice. On hearing Takuya say such confident words, Micott frowned and said, "What do you mean by that?"

"That Amuro Ray who piloted the first "Gundam" was also a student too! The Camille Bidan who piloted the "Zeta Gundam" and Judau Ashta who piloted the "ZZ Gundam" are the same as well. Letting amateurs become pilots is basically a tradition amongst "Gundams"!"

"…You really know your stuff." Riddhe said. Takuya laughed aside Riddhe's obviously lethargic wry remark as he proudly said, "I've researched on it before!"

"Speaking of which, this Nahel Argama became the mothership for the Gundam squads during the First Neo Zeon War, right? It's really coincidental for it to carry a new kind of Gundam here."

If I just talk here, I'll probably be involved in a hurricane of vast knowledge or something here. Riddhe silently looks away from Takuya and stands behind Audrey. "Mobile suit maniacs are so troublesome." Riddhe whispered, and then looks over at Audrey.

"I feel that I've seen your face before."

The voice that did not have any other intent in it caused Audrey's heart to pounce. *No way.* Audrey thought, but did not have the guts to look at Riddhe's expression as she diverted her tense expression to the floor.

The only time I was openly revealed to the public was when I was a kid, and the media most likely never showed photos of me recently. But if it's a Federation officer, there might be a chance he might have seen it before. If saying that I just look like that person doesn't work, at that moment— Audrey clenched her fists, clearing hearing her heart pounding wildly, and on hearing Riddhe say "Ah, I remember", she inadvertently closed her eyes,

"Did anyone say that you look like that actress, Natsume Swanson?"

Riddhe's nonchalant voice caused Audrey to feel extremely weakened. *It was really stupid to tense up over such a thing.* As she thought, Audrey simply answered, "I'm not so familiar with things in the entertainment industry." Riddhe looked downheartened that he could not continue as he scratched his head and said, "Oh, I see…" At this moment, Mihiro sighed and said, "What are you thinking of doing?" Micott glanced over at the two of them and gave a suspicious look.

I definitely can't stay here for long. Audrey again realized this, and right at the moment she was about to turn her eyes away from Micott, the sudden alarm rang in her ears.

"All personnel, prepare for anti-air combat. Mobile suit squadron, prepare for launch immediately."

The monotonous audio voice and the alarm echoed throughout, causing Micott and Takuya to immediately lift their heads. Mihiro prevented them from talking and looked towards the speaker, while

Riddhe stood beside her and was taking the helmet that was strapped to his neck. "…They're here?" He muttered as he threw the thing inside the helmet to Takuya. Once Audrey recognized that was a mini plane model, he had already put it on.

"Help me take care of it. Don't break it." Riddhe said to Takuya, who received the model, "Mihiro, bring these guys to somewhere safe" and then pulled the fastener down. He, who rushed to the operations room's door, showed a stern expression that was completely different from before. Takuya did not know what to do as he took the plane modeal, asking with a doubtful voice, "What's going on?"

"Maybe the enemy is attacking this time. Hurry up and head back to the living quarters!"

"You say an enemy's…coming back again?"

As Takuya's face turned pale, standing beside him was Micott, who covered her ears with her hands, saying "I had enough of this…!" The people inside the mechanic deck were starting to show signs of movements as well as the people who looked like guards were leaving the crowd. Audrey looked around for Banagher, only to find nothing as she carried the floating Haro. She repeated the term in her heart 'Enemy attack'. With the "Garencieres" fighting strength alone, Audrey did not feel that Zinnerman would come over to attack on his own. *Did "Palau" send reinforcements? It's still too early to conclude.* Audrey thought. The chilling feeling caused her to leave the window, and Audrey was told by Mihiro, who carried Micott, to hurry up. She then left the room of the operations room with Takuya.

Several crew members' panicked expressions floated by the red light area. They continued to put on their spaceships as they moved forward, only to realize that the partition walls were all sealed up completely. As their roars rang, Audrey thought of a name who could make the overly-early reinforcements arrive early.

Full Frontal. If he were the man called "The Second Coming of Char", or—the guess that came after did not become words as Audrey exerted more strength into the hand holding onto the lift grip.

Chapter 2[edit]

Part 1[edit]

<Norm Basilicock. Romeo 001, launching>

As he reported that he was leaving the ship through the wireless

communicator, squad leader Norm's "ReZEL" number 1 slid out from the catapult deck. Riddhe saw his thruster flare on the all-view monitor, and grips onto the control stick.

"Riddhe Marcenas, Romeo 008. Launching!"

The display of the countdown timer showed 0. The G force seemed like it was trying to rip off the flesh on the bones as it struck the body, and the catapult deck beside his feet was immediately at its end. Riddhe stepped on the pedal and let the "ReZEL" number 8 fly out of the "Nahel Argama". The wasteland that was right below the ship—the destroyed scenes of the colony flashed by his eyes, and in less than 2 seconds, the machine thrusted itself into the dark vacuum.

Perhaps they were crushed by the pressure from the inside. The debris of the colony look just like crumbled waffles. The passing scenery that was tightly packed together showed the scenery of a phantom city in the vacuum. No matter whether it was the width of 1km all around or the amount of gas floating about, even though this place had many conditions that allowed for the "Nahel Argama" to hide its presence, one would still want to look far away after seeing that white ship object being buried by junk. It looked like there were bugs or something clinging tightly onto the back of wilted leaves and climbing up.

The ship was floating around with shrapnel of all sizes floating around, and the cloud of space junk that was 100km wide in diameter expanded up, forming a debris field that was much thicker within the shoal space region. This was the aftermath of that first battle of the One Year War that increased to such scale that it became the largest fleet battle in history—the colony that was destroyed in the Battle of Loum now looks like this. The Earth Federation and Republic of Zeon clashed with each other directly in this Battle of Loum, right before the Antarctic treaty that forbade the use of weapons of mass destruction. It was said that several colonies were destroyed by the notorious nuclear bazookas. *When they were suddenly sent flying into space with the rubble of the artificial land, did the people manage to realize that they died?* Realizing this, Riddhe felt a chill down his spine. He shook his head slightly and turns his gaze to the front.

And right in front of Riddhe, the following descendants of those who did such damage—the remnants of the Neo Zeon army who were given the derogatory term "Sleeves" were moving towards them. <Using the IFF, not responding and not slowing down.> The wireless radio let out a signal and he could hear the Lieutenant Homare's "ReZEL" number 4 moving beside him side by side. Riddhe makes a

simple check to see that his mobile suit had stopped accelerating. The core reactor was still in good condition, and as he was equipped with a large weapon, the beam launcher, the machine itself was a lot heavier than usual. Riddhe stepped on the pedal and lets the boosters flare out its jets to maintain the machine's posture. He increased the output to 1.5 times to match the equipped beam launcher.

<Romeo 001 to all units. We're using Delta formation. Make effective use of the remains>

As he moved in front, Squad Leader Norm activated the main thruster and moved right at the target. Riddhe and Homare's machines take the two sides. The "ReZELs" formed a triangular formation in the debris. As there was a chance that they might crash into the debris that was overly packed, Riddhe and gang did not change their machines into waveriders. The 3 mobile suits boosters let out short bursts as they moved forward, matching the speed of the remains that were of varying sizes and keeping their hands at a position such that they could shoot immediately when needed.

"We're approaching the ship. Please respond. This was the "Nahel Argama" of the Earth Federation army's Londo Bell. Please state your affiliation and stop your flight. Your ship has entered out ship's defensive line."

There were no Minovsky Particles nearby—because there was no need for that when they could hide their whereabouts in the shoal space region–the communication operator's voice sounded a lot clearer than usual. It was not Mihiro, but Communication Officer Bellard this. *Mihiro was left to be in charge of the civilians, and it seems that she is removed from active duty for now.* As he wondered about this, Riddhe removed the safety of the beam launcher. He used the 30m long rock as a shield and pointed at the target.

They were at the border of absolute defense at the target, and the distance was less than 10m. The target's movements were not changing. Even though it was moving slowly in a straight line while showing the form of debris, one could still detect heat signature from it. On the debris that was formed by the war 16 years ago, joking aside, there might still be heat left in it.

"You terrorists, even if you want to pretend to be a stone block…"

Muttering this, Riddhe placed his hand on the trigger on the control stick. This movement caused the "ReZEL"s mechanical arm to move, and the beam launcher that's the size of an enemy unit points itself at the front. *I'll scare the enemy by pretending to shoot, and then*

immediately move my position to provide cover for squad leader Norm. As Riddhe again reaffirmed the basis of the attack he was taught, he stared at the target inside the reticule. Suddenly, <Wait!> Norm's voice rang.

Norm's unit, which was supposed to be the offense unit, moved to the front. Riddhe kept his position such that he could shoot anytime, moved to a distance such that the optical sensor could detect the profile, and stared at it. The enlarged window of the all-view monitor appears in the corner, and the image that was somewhat crude in definition was corrected by CG. The target's length was less than 50m, and the shape was…

"What the heck…?"

Riddhe's fingertips, which were locked on the trigger, shuddered slightly.

Part 2[edit]

"You say it's junk?"

It's been 6 minutes and 30 seconds since the order was given to begin battle. On hearing the report from the mobile suit squadron that was launched, Otto Mitas could not help but ask. "That's what they said." First Officer Liam Borrinea calmly said.

"We've determined it to be the debris of a Salamis-class ship. It seems that the backup power was still working, and the heat sensor ended up determining it to be something unknown. There were no signs of enemies nearby, and there were no signs of survivors."

"It would be amazing if there were. That's a ship that was sunk more than 10 years ago."

Otto grumbled at the report made by the communications officer and sighed, undoing the fastener of the helmet's latch. *Most likely, it was the dead souls of the Loum battle and other bodies knocking into each other or something and started to float around ending up reaching the sensor range of the "Nahel Argama". The backup power source that was thought to be an unknown object seemed to be activated when it collided, causing a short circuit. That should be the case.*

Vice-Captain Liam and the rest removed their helmets as well and pulled their normal suits collars out to allow air to move in. The horse-shaped bridge on the highest level of the "Nahel Agrama" was not as wide as it looked to be from the outside. In this space that was only about 10m, there's the Captain seat at the middle rear area, which

Otto was sitting at, a seat on the left and right side, one for the communicator and the other for the sensor monitor operator, each facing the panels on the side walls. At the front end of the bridge, starting from the left, there were the navigator, steering operator and weapons controller seats, and right above their seats, there was the main screen on it with many monitors. The windows were set halfway around the bridge, ensuring that it had visibility of ships in the Minovsky era. This layer of window was made of extremely hard plastic, and it could block radiation and even the heat of beams. The front of the bridge was covered with 4 such layers of this thick window panel, and the back part was reinforced with multiple bulletproof armors. With this, they would not have to deploy the protective shutter in battle and could see the outside scene with their eyes, but on the other hand, the bridge that's pressured by the thickness of the shells became much narrower.

In the current age where ordinary bridges were built separately from a battleship's bridge, one could not deny that the "Nahel Argama" bridge's construct resembled more of the old styled concept. But during the One Year War, there was neither time nor technology for the ship to have that level of protective measures. Otto looks at the main screen in front of him, saw the debris of the Salamis-class ship that had 2/3 of its body chiseled away, and felt a little spooked out as he stared at that burnt remnant now.

Most probably, the turbine took a direct hit, and the inside immediately exploded. In that situation, nobody would be able to escape successfully. "Really…are all the parts that aren't human taken away from the junk here?" Otto muttered to himself as he turned his back on the main screen. If it were his grandmother, she would probably draw a cross in front of her chest. But to Otto, who was an atheist, it was rather rare for him to even pray silently in his heart for a single moment.

"Even if it's that kind of thing, it's a piece of treasure to those guys from the recycling business. Shall we contact them to earn some bucks?"

Otto tried to speak up in a motivated tone to hide the fear inside him, but the laughter he hoped for never appeared, and he could only see First Officer Liam, who's returning back to the navigation seat, roll the thick eyelids. That large burly 40 year old female, both horizontally and vertically, was larger than Otto himself, and like usual, stares at him without a smile, showing a frivolous attitude as she turns back to the console. Otto breathed hard through his nostrils to make up for this blank timing and ordered with a somewhat tired voice, "Alert removed. Operations to resume as per normal. Let the mobile suits return back

to the ship."

Communications Officer Bellard broadcasted this to the entire ship, and Liam looks back at Otto again, saying, "Was this good?" Otto was overwhelmed by that abnormally forceful poker face, and asks back, "Was there a problem?" Her face that was covered by some form of unknown make-up was staring at Otto, and she turned back forward without saying anything. *What's going on?* Otto did not even have the strength to sigh out as he removed the helmet and looks up at the ceiling.

It's said that a captain's nightmare would be two things, one, losing a ship, and two, riding on a ship with a crew that's not on good terms with him. However, Otto himself felt that there should be an additional item, and that will be having a large woman who was so hard to handle that he could not let his guard down around her as the First Officer. Otto managed to fight his way to the rank of a captain without any obvious battle accomplishments or camaraderie with people, only through his general qualifications. It was one thing for the battleship itself to be an unorthodox model that was hard to maneuver; it's another thing for First Officer Liam's existence to prick his nerves no matter when. Instead of saying that there were too many incompatible things between them…it's more like she never had any intent of getting along. Whether it's for good or bad, one could say that Liam had the temper of an artist, but her silent presence will sometimes overpower the captain and even dominate the atmosphere inside the bridge. Of course, it's not like she herself didn't try to avoid this situation through her own means, but her expression that already lacked emotion could give off a frivolous vibe. Sometimes, the crew on the ship will even say random things like "Captain Liam, First Officer Otto".

In fact, in terms of instinctively detecting danger like an animal, her instincts were sharper than his, and her simple personality of ensuring the safety of the ship was guaranteed. That's why he could not just leave her alone like that. Otto had already been looking forward to an ordinary life with no extraordinary events, but the aftermath of the battle this time may affect him in some way. *No, I might not even be able to guarantee that I will survive this time.* Thinking about it this time, Otto's heart was covered with a layer of gloom.

Ever since the battle started, the command given by the advising headquarters were to 'retreat' and 'remain on standby'. They were only told to first leave "Industrial 7" before the media surrounded them; remain on standby until reinforcements arrive, and nothing else. They lost more than half of their fighting capabilities, and the enemy was still out there, so even without instructions, they could only retreat. Even

though they entered deep inside the shoal space region and use the debris of the colony as a place to hide, it's been more than half a day since they were left alone.

The retreat point was sent from the base coordinates of L1, so there's no reason why the reinforcements could not find as. Since this mission is so special, is the reason why the reinforcements are so slow was because the higher-ups were arguing over 'adjustments' because of the unexpected damage from the battle? This might be more appropriate. It will be alright if we can get contact with the command of Londo Bell, Otto thought. *If there's something, the Londo Bell fleet will be on standby. Once they know that an ally is in trouble, they will hurry over to assist without waiting for the senators to make their decisions. But since we're undertaking this secret mission under a direct from the Senate Council, we could not just make contact with our original affiliation as we wish—*

Do we even have a next move? Otto felt tired over his thoughts that were going nowhere, and felt that it's time to tidy his head that had been thinning in hair over the past few hours. He saw Commander Daguza Mackle walk in front the automatic door at the back, and hurriedly puts the captain's hat that was hung on the side of the seat.

Daguza was wearing a deep dark brown normal suit which one would identify him as a member of ECOAS, and he removed his helmet, turning his head around to look. He seems to understand what was going on with such a motion, and turns his narrow eyes at Otto, saying, "May I know if it's true that you mistook debris for an enemy unit?" Daguza asked with a voice that sounded courteous "Just like what you're seeing." Otto answered back coldly.

"Luckily, we're not facing the enemy…up till now, there were still no signs of our army appearing."

Otto finally said with a wry tone. To Otto, the reason behind so much trouble was because of the unshakeable fact that ECOAS used them as a transport. To this transport captain who did not have much authority, ECOAS and the higher-ups of the Federation could be said to be birds of a feather. However, Daguza did not seem to mind. The large body with the cast wrapped around his left arm was standing beside the Captain's side,

"Leaving aside our allies, the enemy will definitely arrive." He continued without emotion,

"Unlike us, the "Sleeves" have a very simple objective. A simple enemy will be much faster in their movement."

Liam gives a sinister look at Daguza. All the crew in the ship felt repulsed by the ECOAS members, but ever since they left the dock, she seemed to have twice the hatred for Daguza than anyone else. *Why in the world is this guy here?* Otto leaves aside Liam's expression that was telling him this, sighed and says, "That "box" they were talking about…?"

"That's right. The enemy felt that we've taken the "box"."

"How can you conclude so?"

"There's no evidence to deny this. Even though the enemy's depleted as well, that four-winged mobile suit is still out there. Once there's a chance to get it, they will use force to come over to check."

One could feel that beside Liam, everyone in the bridge suddenly jerked. Everyone knew that with their current firepower, they could not match the enemy machine that's equipped with psycommu and was like a monster. *Do I have to say it?* Liam glares at Otto with the blaming look, "Looks like you're trying to say that now's not the time to leisurely wait for reinforcements." Otto seized the initiative to talk.

"Yes. We'll first break through with this ship before the enemy discovers us. It will be smarter to leave this space region."

"Do you want me to ignore the orders from headquarters? Something like this…"

"Is within the jurisdiction of the current commander. A captain makes a decision by considering the safety of the ship and the crew, and after that, he could get recognition when everyone saw that he managed to preserve the weapons."

Otto cannot say anything that will ensure the pride of a captain in response to Daguza's solid logic. At this moment, Daguza seized the initiative and added on, "We should hurry and return back to "Lunar Two"."

"The Gundam -type mobile suit that was taken back may very likely be related to the "Box". The Senate Council will also hope for us to do such a thing."

This report did reach headquarters. "But…" Otto's eyes start to look away. He would not have any standing if he let Daguza beat him completely in giving suggestions. "I agree, captain." Otto was panicking over what to argue back about as another voice rang inside the ship.

"But we're not heading to "Lunar Two", but the moon."

As he says that, Alberto makes his way into the bridge. The normal suit he's wearing makes his plump body stand out further as he stood beside the captain's seat. He glanced at Daguza and gives a polite smile that was hard to stomach, saying "Unlike "Lunar Two" that's on the other side of the Earth, the moon was just nearby, so it will be easily to head there, I suppose?" *More than that, I'm really bothered that you would just randomly come in here.* Before Otto could say that, Daguza let out a calm voice and said, "Not necessarily." The fuse starting the debate immediately lit up.

"The enemy's predicting that we will head to the Moon as well. There's a possibility that we will be ambushed on the way. No matter how far the distance will be, we should move towards "Lunar Two"."

"Space is large. I don't think it's easy to ambush us. Besides, we can still break through the ambush with our remaining fighting strength, right?"

"Our movements within the shoal space region are limited. Besides, in terms of military affairs, losing two-thirds of our fighting strength is practically total annihilation. Right now, it's not a situation where we can simply force our way through."

"In that case, we could not get to "Lunar Two", right? Aren't you a little too hasty to bring that "Gundam" back to the military, Commander Daguza?"

"We'll naturally feel anxious if we don't get reinforcements. That's because the military command seems to have some civilian pressure in this mission."

"That sounds like an excuse from you. You have to finish any mission. Isn't that what a soldier should do? It will be unreasonable to blame it on us when the mission fails."

"Because of this, I have to speak up as a soldier. Right now, we should have this ship break through this space region and return back to "Lunar Two". There's no other way to complete this mission."

"What was your mission? To prevent the "Box" from falling into the hands of Neo Zeon? Or to use this chance to grab the "Box" and let the army use it?"

"Since you say so, Mr. Alberto, what do you plan to do after taking the "Box" back to the moon? Are you going to lock the "Box" back into the shared treasury between Anaheim and the Vist Foundation like the past?"

This tug-of-war that left the captain aside finally paused at this point. As Alberto immediately tried to argue back, “KNOW YOUR PLACE!” Otto roared to stop him.

“This is a bridge, not a place for you to carry out your debates, and definitely not a place where outsiders can randomly come and go at will! I agree that ECOAS can do whenever they want to in this mission, but I didn’t say that your suggestions are welcomed, Commander Daguza.”

Daguza was definitely a mature adult for shutting up and backing away, but on the other hand, Alberto gives a smug look while looking like he managed to win this time, “ YOU TOO, MR. ALBERTO!” and Otto could only do the same to him.

“Even if this is a secret mission, the limits of our ship’s actions are completely based around counter-terrorism. The reason why the reinforcements are delayed is simply because of a problem with the procedures, nothing to do with the “Box” at all. I hope you don’t forget your role as a civilian inspector.”

Even though he already knew that these would be words of an idealized scene, Otto said so as he stood by his words. “If that’s the case, I’m fine with it…” Alberto looks like he was not listening as he scratched his sagging cheek.

“Right now, the “Nahel Argama” is an independent force that was commanded by the Senate Council at the last minute. Under the jurisdiction of the counter-terrorist laws, our ship is already considered one of the few fighting forces who can act on their own without the Federation Senate’s permission, right? Who knows how much time we will take letting the main forces mobilize…as an inspector, I still suggest that we head to the moon. This is to prevent you from having to resign over such a large responsibility, captain.”

“Londo Bell has carried out countermeasures, but the Senate Council may be deliberately withholding information. Londo Bell might not even know that we’re waiting here to while they’re wary of multiple terrorism acts. I feel that we should head back to “Lunar Two” and wait for the Senate Council’s instructions.”

Daguza spoke up after Alberto did so. “I AM THE CAPTAIN HERE! ANYTHING WITHIN THIS SHIP WILL…” suddenly, a siren rang, causing the roaring Otto to swallow his words.

While everyone was still frozen there, Liam had already turned towards for the sensor operator’s seat. “What’s the matter!?” Otto asked with an enraged tone. “Another misjudgment. It looks like the piece of debris just now was slowing down.” The sensor operator’s voice caused Otto to be rooted.

“It’s probably some cooling agent or something accumulated inside spraying out. The target’s heat source is unstable. It’s a little hard to determine the identification conditions for it.”

Once the alert instruction was removed, Liam said with a calm voice. *A Salamis-class debris floated here through some coincidence, slowed down due to some coincidence, triggering the motion sensor and the alarm?* Otto holds back his sigh and asked, “What’s the relative velocity?”

“Zero. It’s already floating right above our ship.”

The main window shows the remnant that just so happens to be right above the ship. If the speed and heat weren’t stable, the Salamis-class debris would be mistaken as an unidentified unit once it changed trajectory. Though he could only pray for it to hurry up and leave the range, it just had to be of the same relative velocity as the Nahel Argama. “Was there a dead soul of Loum occupying it?” Otto glanced aside at Alberto who was saying it like it was somebody else’s business, grabs onto the handrail tightly and sighs hard. *As a captain, I must not randomly roar out. I have to remain calm.* Otto muttered to himself within his chest that’s about to explode and commands with a highly restrained voice, “Let the mobile suit squad remove it.”

“We should be able to push it out if it’s of that size.”

“But they returned back.”

The already impeccably calm Liam answered. “What?”

“They’ve returned back to the ship as you commanded before.”

That’s what I was trying to ask you just now The emotionless Liam’s expression was saying so. *Be clearer so that I could understand!* As Otto argued back deep inside his heart while biting his lips, Communication Officer Bellard says, “Should we order them to launch again?” Otto saw that Daguza was looking away in an unimportant direction, and Alberto was giving a vague smile. The self-restraint he

had several seconds ago was pointless as he roars, “SHOOT IT DOWN WITH THE MAIN CANNON!”

“Yes…” The weapons operator answered as he looks past Otto and right at ‘Captain” Liam’. “Why aren’t you repeating it!?” Otto’s enraged voice overwhelmed his doubt.

“Yes, main cannon, ready to be fired. Bridge’s designated target is…” The weapons operator frantically turned his face to the console and hurriedly sent the instructions to the gunnery room. Otto snorted out warm breath from his nose and steadied himself on the Captain’s seat again. Liam gave him a hesitant look. *To heck with that, I’m the captain here. I can’t let my First Officer’s expression affect my own view, and there’s no reason for me to be told off by other squads or civilians. To a crew, a captain has to have god-like authority here. Isn’t this the pride and tradition of the seafarers ever since the times of the Navy?*

Even so, wouldn’t it be too casual for me to use the main cannon? As a fearful wind brushed Otto’s back, the weapons operator’s report can be heard, “Front cannon, firing preparations complete.” causing Otto to swallow his saliva. *Daguza and Alberto are looking at well. I could not take back the order. I’ll be looked down on by others all the more.* As he made up his mind, Otto squeezed out a voice, “Get ready!”

“FIRE!”

Part 3[edit]

A mega-particle cannon of a battleship-class ship could be seen, and the power output was vastly different from a mobile suit’s beam rifle. The beam released by the enemy ship was a thin light that looks like a thread, and one could see it with the naked eye. The Salamis-class debris that was directly hit gave out light in the explosion and scattered all over the place, becoming small flickering lights. Marida Cruz saw all of that.

<Just as expected. They even earnestly used the ship’s cannon for us. Now we know the position of the enemy>

Gilboa Sant’s voice echoed throughout the bridge, and they could tell that he was extremely agitated through the wireless radio. Marida let her body float behind the steering seat and stared at the pitch black vacuum that extends out infinitely outside the window. Gilboa Sant’s “Geara Zulu” was about 90km away from this “Garencieres”, and was making full use of the sensors of the machine to detect the space region the enemy ship was in. From the relative position of less than 200km away, they should be able to see the beam and the explosion

clearly. If the situation was good, they might even be able to detect the enemy's correct position.

They found a piece of debris that was of the right size, caused it to produce heat, and let it float to the shoal space region that might have the enemy ship hidden inside. Once the enemy ship mistakes it for an unknown enemy unit and sends out units to intercept it, they could deduce the location of the ship through the units' location. The "Sleeves" basically viewed the Shoal Space Region as a garden, so it was not hard for them to deduce a specific coordinate from a vague position. Also, the enemy ship firing the main cannon so carelessly allows them to save a lot on manpower. "Alright, call Gilboa to come back." Leaving aside Suberoa Zinnerman's voice, Marida asked herself, *What kind of enemies are they…*

From the experiences of what happened in Industrial 7, I could tell that they're a squad that's not used to battle. An ordinary Federation ship that viewed daily training as part of work…are they such an enemy? Then what's the mysterious pressure I feel—

"We're moving to an area where we can carry out laser communication, and we'll send out a message to the "Rewloola". Is there still no action at Industrial 7?"

"Just ships moving to and fro from the moon. Side 2 is sending aid, but there's no signs of any forces residing there."

In response to Zinnerman's question, the other crew member who took over Gilboa's seat answered as he sat on the navigator's seat. The optical sensor received the visual image that's far away, and there was an interrupted electronic news broadcast from long distance that was mixed with static. In the past few hours, he had been keeping his hand on the headset to listen to the situation. "Don't tell me that ship got abandoned." Flaste Schole said as he sat at the steering seat. Half a day had passed since then, and even the civilian aid had started. It was really strange that there was not even a Federation ship coming over for reinforcements. "They probably suffered by undertaking such a dishonorable mission and were most likely viewed to not have existed in the first place." Leaving Zinnerman's words behind, Marida focuses her consciousness in the vacuum.

The debris floating around absorbed the sunlight far away and let out white lights that were vaguely bright and faint at times. This was the shoal space region Marida was used to seeing, the space dust that distorts with the bright light. On that side, the remains of the colony were gathered, having a hidden heavy 'presence' inside. It was not the kind that could be felt on the battlefield, the 'presence' that would come

over at her, but the ‘presence’ that’s coming out from a certain existent, one similar to the breathing of a beast…

“What is it, Marida? You sensed something?”

The doubtful voice hit her from behind as the consciousness that was being sucked into the vacuum returns to the body. Marida turned to the captain’s seat and looked at her master who detected her reaction through her eyes. They do have reinforcements, but the “Garencieres” had a setback in the mission, and was now isolated without help, which makes them not so different from the enemy ship. Marida sensed Flaste and the rest pricking their ears, and she, who was relied on as the sensor amongst the crew, was shown looks of concern. She lowered her head and says, “No, it’s just…”

“I feel that the princess isn’t in Industrial 7 anymore.”

Unexpected words came out from Marida’s mouth, and she shut up. She had never thought of this before until now—but she did realize it when she said it out. She sensed ‘her’ presence when she went by the mysterious pressure given off by the enemy’s ship. *That’s right, did I hear ‘her’ voice before when I fought with that white mobile suit that’s most likely kept there…?*

“You’re thinking too much.”

Zinnerman approached Marida from behind and put his hand on her shoulder, causing her to jerk.

“The “Rewloola” will immediately attack that ship. Whether they have the “Box” or not, we just need to go back to Industrial 7 after that. We’ll definitely find her.”

Marida felt a sense of warmth in her shoulder that was touching. *That’s right. It’s not my job to think. I just need to follow this person who’s giving me warmth from his hand behind me.* “Understood, master.” She answered softly and temporarily releases the strength inside her. Zinnerman supports her loosened body with one arm and scratches the hard beard on his chin.

“Let’s check out Full Frontal’s abilities.”

Part 4[edit]

“The “Garencieres” sent a report to us?”

The moment he entered the door, Angelo Sauper asked with a voice that was loud enough to echo throughout the entire bridge. Sitting on the Captain’s seat was Ship Captain Hill, who gives an unhappy look

to him, frowning as he says, “We’re able to search out the target’s L1 basic target thanks to their report.”

“It seems that they’re near the remnants of the colony. There aren’t any other enemies around. In another three hours, we can capture the enemy in our range.”

“Just like what we expected. Those guys are left on their own. That’s what happens to those who failed in their own secret mission.”

The smile on Angelo’s lips widened as he put his hand on the back of the Captain’s seat. Even though it might be viewed as being unruly, Hill had no intent on correcting him. As the piloting crew of the transport carrier was in charge of protecting their forces, the atmosphere was such that they will allow for any forms of insubordination and overruling of authority. Amongst them, Full Frontal’s own escort squad’s identity was even more unique. Angelo ignored the Vice-commander’s look of frustration as he turned his eyes to the navigation screen.

Down the indicated arched trajectory of L1 in a block of shoal space region, the light spot representing the target was blinking. The coordinates were <L1+02373.E39034.N44393>. The speed and distance in space could only be indicated in relative terms, but the relative positions between the Earth and the Moon would remain constant. If the average value of the gravity of Earth and the Moon was used, they could at least mark an absolute value on the coordinate trajectory. At their current speed, they will need 3 hours before reaching their target. If they accelerate, they would reach the target earlier, but it was no picnic accelerating too much in the shoal space region. Even though they were using their own shoal space region maps that were much more detailed than the universal specifications, they could not avoid all the debris, and the ship itself was grazing by space dust and rubble of all sizes. Angelo felt that Ship Captain Hill’s judgement was correct and simply looked around at the bridge with more than ten communication operators working.

The bridge of the “Rewloola”, which had entered space for less than 5 years, was still considered a new model. This bridge in particular had an outstanding view and wide space, which Angelo really fancied. The unique traits were the ceiling that was most likely two levels high and the setup that puts the navigator’s seat cleanly in mid-air with support, allowing the operators to work right above the Captain. The observation window that was designed for one purpose only was put at the front to preserve sight, the 3-dimesional space was effectively used, and all the designs on the bridge could be used independently in

battle. It could be said that the “Rewloola” itself was one of the results of the ship-building ideas during the Minovsky era that was maximized.

The ship’s shape itself had quite the characteristics as well. The ship’s body looked like a triangular block from above, and had many curves all over it to make it look alive. The 6 ball shaped booster tanks that were placed on both sides of the hulls look like the eggs of a living thing. It was not a far-cry to say that the “Rewloola” inherited the design of the large battleship of the old Republic of Zeon’s army, the Sadalahn-class. As for the reason why the ship itself was painted scarlet red, that was because the ex-commander-in-chief Char once rode on this ship, leaving behind a great influence.

The second Neo Zeon war was also known as Char’s Counterattack. Char Aznarble was the commander of the army at that time—as the son of the deceased Zeon Deikum and also the Zeon army’s Red Comet that terrorized the Federation. It was impossible for the flagship he rode on before not to be painted with the color red. He was about to send the hammer of judgement to the Federation to let the world known that the son of Zeon was to end his time of hiding. The “Rewloola” had to have the color red on it.

After an intense battle, the Neo Zeon army retreated in defeat, and the commander-in-chief Char disappeared as well, but such a closure made it hard to actually decide the winner. Londo Bell, which was the frontline of the Federation, took a devastating blow, letting the Neo Zeon fleet. After spacing into the Shoal Space region, they had an idea of using the remaining forces to launch special attacks, but after having lost their spiritual leader in Char, the Neo Zeon army was basically divided. At least half of the survivors scattered, and the fleet that became an empty space stayed in an asteroid full of resources that was basically a wasteland to catch their breaths, waiting for their annihilation—until that man called “The Second Coming of Char” appeared again, prompting Neo Zeon to rise again for the third time.

It had been 2 years after that. The “Rewloola” regained the life it had back then, and right now, the revived Neo Zeon army that was derogatory called “Sleeves” started to make use of its capabilities as a flagship. Including the Captain, most of the members were new, but there were still some deserters amongst the NCOs. Angelo felt there would not be an end to this if he was to pursue this, and he had no intent of doing so as well.

These activists included people who once escaped and yet came back after knowing that Neo Zeon was coming back, people of the Deikum sect and the Zabi sect who had been arguing against each other and

started fighting over the basic ideologies as well. Angelo felt that they were all existences that could not be replaced. *What the revived Neo Zeon army needs were the passion of young people and young blood. Only the young who will not dwell in their past defeats and focus all their efforts on revolution could became the core of the organization. That man had admitted this as well. That man who had the innate nobility and talent to lead us from birth intend to fulfill the ideas of Zeon and the real independence of Spacenoids. The pain and loneliness of Mankind that's bestowed to the world was ultimately not what the vast number of vulgar people could understand. As he looks around at the bridge crew that were giving him stupefied looks, Angelo fluffs up the fringe that's sagging down to his forehead and says to Ship Captain Hill, "We're getting ready to launch."*

"The battle will end in ten minutes. We just need to watch the battle here, Captain."

"Sounds really intense. Will it really be that easy?"

On hearing Hill's distressed tone, Angelo stopped his feet that were about to turn.

"The Federation had already done this trick of using optical observation on the shoal space region. They probably know about where we are. While they will normally let us go, this situation now involves that Laplace Box or something, right? If it were so secretive that the Manhunters have to be mobilized to take it back, the news that we're closing in should be received by the enemy ship.

"The Federation's ability to adapt isn't that good. The number of forces they can hide is limited. Right now, they should be arguing amongst themselves over what they should be doing. None of them want to take responsibility for this."

"That's good if that were the case."

"There's no sign of reinforcements, right? No one's backing them, that's why." Angelo showed a formal smile and let his body float towards the door. "Besides, if those guys were so efficient, we would be annihilated. The human economy isn't so solid that it can be balanced in complete safety after all."

"An occasional terrorist attack isn't anything much if we consider the millions of jobless people, is that so?"

"That's the case. That's why there's a need to change this rotten society, to allow humanity to live on for another 100 years."

Captain Hill narrowed his eyes slightly as he answered with silence. *You're still green*, these words were telegraphed to Angelo's back, and Angelo answered in his heart *I'll remember that* as he left the bridge.

Part 5[edit]

The moment he arrived on the mobile suit deck, the smell of grease and the body heat permeated the air inside the enclosed space, and the air that was heated by the electric cables let out such a smell. Angelo was bothered that the smell of cologne on his uniform was nullified as he kicked the floor, passed through a passage and floated to the large deck.

There were 12 mobile suits docked inside the "Rewloola". In the large and expansive space, 6 mechanical hangars were lined up on each side, and one could see the main machines "Geara Zulu" placed them. The mobile suit silhouette itself was based on the Zaku-types of the Republic, and the part that was basically the wrist had a sleeve logo drawn on it. One could tell its affiliation from the logo's color or the design itself, and this was the reason why the Neo Zeon army was derogatorily called "Sleeves". Also, leaving aside the blade antenna that indicated the leader's machine, even the shoulder armor all had flexibility that allowed affiliation or rank to be changed, which allowed the "Geara Zulu" to show the characteristic of not being a mass-produced suit.

Amongst them, the most eye-catching would be the escort squad's machine. Angelo let his body flot towards the 3 escort squad machines on the deck. The machine had sharp armor plates on both shoulders, and the fixed shields were removed, making the silhouette more offensive. The back had two thruster tanks and stabilizers, and they were attachments that were taller than the shoulders, and one could imagine them to be like angel's wings. The other thruster tank and stabilizer that was not installed was on the back of the butt, poking out like a tail, causing the entire appearance to be more suitably described as a demon, a ferocious demon that protects the Red Comet—

Most notably, Angelo's squad leader machine was designed with a purple base coloring, making it stand out from the thick green machines. While checking the preparations for his own machine, Angelo went for the mechanical hangar's platform. As the mechanic officer and the rest were inspecting on the spare parts, the other two pilots of the escort squad quickly saluted Angelo.

These two people were the tall, lankly blond with good looks, Lieutenant Cuarón and Ensign Sergi with cold green eyes. Both of them were officers in their early 30s, and the green uniforms of the escort squad really suited them. These two backup pilots and the other mechanics on this ship who were less than 30 years old were all part of Full Frontal's own personal escort squad. However, they were given special privileges in equipment and training. Each of them was strictly chosen from the army, talents who were able to beat 100 enemies. Angelo stepped onto the platform and notified the duo, "We're sorting out in 3 hours. Remain on standby until then." Cuarón and Sergi stood still "Yes, Lieutenant Angelo." They chanted.

"It will be your first battle as part of the escort squad for you today, Ensign Sergi. How does the "Geara Zulu" of our escort squad look?"

"Yes! The machine's more specialized in long distanced combat than I imagined, but I'll try to get used to me. I won't forget your kindness in nominating me for the escort squad."

"Don't give yourself pressure. Meritocracy is Zeon's tradition. Just

perform as per usual…besides, there probably won't be any chance for you to perform this time."

Cuarón gave a meaningful smile, and Sergi frowned in a puzzled manner. Angelo flicked his own fringe and told Sergi, "The Captain will be sorting out today. There's no work for us."

"…What do you mean by that?"

"You'll understand once the battle starts."

Angelo inadvertently curled his lips and turned his eyes to the mechanic behind him, ordering them, "Captain Full Frontal will be coming over. Don't ever ease up the atmosphere in the mobile suit deck until the end." The mechanic answered, "Yes, I'll inform the rest!' and floated away from the platform. Angelo watched him leave, and in his eyes, he saw a mobile suit that was docked in the deepest part of the deck. The crimson red giant was larger than the "Geara Zulu". As Angelo stared at the cockpit that was basically the abdomen of the machine, the excited Sergi whispered to him, "So the rumors are really true?"

"Like how the Captain won't wear a normal suit when sorting out."

The green eyes flickered, and Sergi looked like he wanted to say "It's like…" Angelo corrected Sergi inside his heart. *It's not that it seems, but that it is*, "Yeah, there's no need for that for the Captain."

"That's because he has the belief that he will definitely return from the battlefield."

Sergi's boyish face turned slightly red as his eyes were captured by the red mobile suit. Cuarón turned his back on Sergi, smiling proudly, while Angelo turned his eyes onto the machine that was waiting for the master to arrive. The MSN-06S "Sinanju" was a crimson red machine that used a large around of curves as part of Zeon's flair and had a elegant and streamlined contour. *That is the only mobile suit that matches that man, the Red Comet who will snatch the Box, which has a secret that can topple the Federation, and liberate the world.* Angelo was immersed in his own motivating thoughts as he smiled away in a fanatical manner.

Part 6[edit]

<All personnel, regaining space visual department. All passages open.>

A vague voice could be heard as it echoed through the speakers inside the ships. As he saw the sergeant beside him heave a sigh and

remove his helmet, Banagher asked, “Is it over?”

“Yeah. You can take it off too.” The sergeant answered while he took off the fastener of the normal suit. This middle-aged sergeant who was giving off a vibe that he trained officer was an NCO who was assigned to guard the command post, and it seemed that he was an old-timer who had the most experience in being a guard. He was the one who brought Banagher here to evacuate after the siren alert for battle rang. They were near the “Unicorn”s maintenance hangar, and several rows of normal suits were lined up in this room. Currently, he and Banagher were the only ones around.

As the wireless network in the ship was activated during battle, they could hear the conversations between the bridge and all the other departments. However, Banagher still could not say that he could even vaguely understand the conversations that included lot of technical jargon. Even though he could roughly tell that this raid was a bogus judgment, it was still a mystery why the main cannon of the ship was fired. As they were evacuating, he could hear messages like <Backup personnel, swap duties 5 minutes earlier> and <Execute Assignment A>, and he could see the passengers walking around frantically at the doors. *They’re working, huh?* Banagher thought blankly. *Even if they’re the military, there’s nothing unique about them. They’re just like the workers in the factories, doing their own duties to let the ship move, that’s all—*

“That’s why I’m asking where you’re bringing me to…haa? How will I know if the squad leader doesn’t?”

The sergeant growled angrily into the room’s internal phone he picked up. The lax assignment of duties caused the crew to be unable to handle the unexpected situation. *Everyone’s not used to an actual battle, huh?* As he thought about that, Banagher was about to keep the normal suit he put on as a familiar color and shape crossed by him.

“Haro…?”

Banagher did not think that he made a mistake in identifying it. He went after the green ball that moved past the door and arrived outside the locker room. “Oi, don’t just run out like that!” the sergeant growled. “That’s mine.” Banagher answered and held onto the grip lift. “Oi, wait!” Banagher kicked the floor as he ignored the sergeant who left the phone behind.

Banagher thought that he could catch Haro immediately, but it ignored his calls as it flapped its ears and nimbly turned around the corner. “Oi, you! Hold it!” as he heard the sergeant’s growls behind him, Banagher

switched grip lifts at a cross junction and moved down a narrow passage 90 degrees aside. *That's weird. There's no reason for Haro to ignore me like this. Maybe somebody else gave it a verbal command. If the memory's not deliberately deleted later, Haro will treat the owner and anyone it talked to for a long time as a friend. If it can follow even a simple command, the only ones on this ship who are registered as friends are Takuya, Micott, and as for the rest—*

At the second turn of the cross junction, Banagher finally caught up to Haro just before it turned around the corner. As he carried it, he felt that it stopped on its own, and said, "This isn't good. You have to be with everyone." Haro's eyes merely flickered as it answered, *<Haro>* Banagher was about to return to the locker room when a hand reached out for the coat of the collar.

Banagher was pulled from the back of his head and went into a door on the passage that was opened. He wanted to share it off immediately, but got a glimpse of the emerald green eyes that shone in the dim light, and his heart pounded crazily.

"There's no time, Banagher. Listen to me."

Audrey. The mouth of the emerald-eyed girl covered Banagher who was about to call her name, and she showed an irritated look, muttering quickly, "Oi, brat. Answer me!" On hearing the sergeant's angry growl pass by the door, Banagher nodded at her. Audrey released the hand holding Banagher down and led him deep into a room that was like a storeroom with all the lights switched off.

The light that shone in through the door caused the purple cape that fluttered with the air to appear. *Why is she here? What happened to Ensign Mihiro and the rest? There were a lot of things Banagher really wanted to ask, but he did not even have the time to ask as Audrey pushed him to the pile of cardboard boxes that was fastened with a belt, and brought her face close to a distance where he could feel her breathing. She let out a questioning voice, "Did you really activate the "Unicorn Gundam"?"*

"Unicorn…Gundam?"

The term was something he knew, yet it felt alien to him. Banagher repeated the term that was that felt like a mysterious curse, sometimes safe and sometimes dangerous like a parrot. "So that was the name of that machine." Banagher accepted it in his heart unconditionally. "What happened?" Audrey's anxious voice repeated.

"Seemed that way…"

“You say it seems—”

“I don’t really know. Everything happened so quickly. There wasn’t even a warning or something…”

Banagher diverted his eyes away from the frowning Audrey as his eyes escaped to the shadow formed by the gaps between the boxes. The bloodied face in his nightmare appeared in the shadows , causing him to clench his fists.

On one hand, Cardeas talked about believing in possibilities and doing what one had to do. On the other hand, he could hear Cardeas talk through the wireless network like a war merchant. "Which one is the real you?" Banagher thought as he recalled the words Alberto said. “Alright.” At this moment, Audrey sighed. She turned away as she made up her mind.

“Can you still activate it?”

Audrey’s voice sounded rather sound. "Eh?" Banagher thought as he looked up. As he was held down by the intimidating stare in her eyes, he answered, “I guess…”

“Then, leave this place with me.”

Her calm voice caused Banagher to hold his breath and gasp. He looked around meaninglessly, and then asked, “Here, as in, this ship?” as he stared at Audrey who was floating 30cm away from him. She however did not even nod.

“Impossible. I can’t do this.”

“There’s always a way when you get onto the Gundam. The ship crew here isn’t experienced enough. The remaining problem is to shake off the Special Forces.”

Audrey said as she diverted her eyes to a corner of the ceiling. Banagher realized that there was a surveillance camera there, and exchanged looks with her serious expression. He eked out a voice, “Audrey…”

“You can still make it back to Industrial 7 now. Once you reach there, I’ll deal with the machine. You’ll be fine when you say that you were threatened, right?”

“But…”

“That’s a dangerous machine that can’t be handed to anyone. We have to destroy it before it docks in the Federation base…”

“Please wait for a while, okay…!”

Banagher was driven by the fear that was about to blow him up from within as he subconsciously grabbed Audrey’s shoulders. He pulled her body down from the air and stared at the eyes that were at the same height level as him. Audrey looked over with an expression that was hard to discern.

“I don’t understand what you’re saying. What did you say that mobile suit is? Please explain it clearly to me.”

“There’s no time now. I’ll explain the details to you later. First…”

“How can I decide on something without knowing what’s going on!? Why must you talk to me like this!?”

“Like this…?”

“Like you have to do this, like there’s a need to do that. It’s really too sly to try and force someone to accept it in such a way…besides, ain’t I not someone you don’t nee?”

Even though he felt that it was sneaky of him to say it, Banagher still said it. Everyone only thought of saying what would be convenient to them and not actually talking heart to heart. Even though those were the words of others, he could only feel empty as he was left in the lurch. "What can I believe now when some things have to be decided in such a situation now?"

Banagher felt that his stomach was starting to heat up as he shut up and turned his back on Audrey. He pressed a fist against a cardboard box and muttered with clenched fists, “Everyone’s making decisions on their own…”

“You too, the people here too, even that man…” The heat continued to swell and rise in him, breaking through his restrain. Realizing this, Banagher closed his eyes and squeezed out his remaining words, “Saying that he’s my father out of a sudden…”

“Father?”

“Forcing that kind of mobile suit to me, saying it’s the curse of the Vist Family, and the Laplace Box or something…I don’t even know what’s what now!”

Banagher felt that Audrey held her breath. “Are you talking, about that Cardeas Vist? Then, you’re the Vist family—”

“I don’t know! I was separated from him when I was young, and I

couldn't even remember his face. He didn't come over to mother's funeral, he wouldn't even meet us, and now out of a sudden…"

The thoughts after that never became words. The hatch limiting his emotions was gone. Fear and anger raged on in his abdomen as if it was a backlash of emotions that was held for several hours. After a stunned silence, Audrey muttered, "Such things happened…" Banagher could hear the surprised voice that seemed to understand something from behind him as he moved to reach for Haro that was floating in the air with nowhere to go.

This was an old toy that he continued to maintain and update ever since he received it as a Christmas gift at the age of 5. The familiar touch entered his clutches safely. At that time, the fad for toys ended in less than a year, and it was a long time ago since the time when the manufacturer stopped sales of Haro. Even so, Banagher never let go of Haro when he entered middle school. He would try his best to repair it himself whenever it was spoilt, and his mother would often nag at him in an annoyed manner,

"Just give it up already. Haro's already at its limit. Isn't it weird to go around with an old toy?"

"It can still move if I repair it. That's nothing bad about it."

How did the mother feel when she knew who gave that Haro to this son of hers who argued back? No, Banagher had already realized that it was a gift from his father, and his mother knew that Banagher already knew about that. Even though nobody said it out, both of them viewed that as an unspoken secret and accepted Haro as a family member. *Why am I still bringing it around? Is it because it's the only thing linking me to the father I know? I never had the feeling of wanting to meet my father before.*

No—I probably still want to meet him. I created an impression of father myself though mother's words and the immaturity of my sealed memories. I let myself believe to make up for the 'absent' reality, and there are still a lot of things I should really look forward too. Banagher was hoping that he could one day lift his head up high and meet the man who was his father, and such an idea gave him his minimum level of aspiration and made him not stay inside the slums that were his hometown. Perhaps it was this motivation to improve that was effective in a certain way that was able to allow him to endure his mother's death and take on that loneliness of being isolated by the world.

But in reality—Banagher put down Haro and closed up the seal of his memories. Haro floated around in zero gravity, hit the wall and flicker

its eyes, flapping its ears and making some sounds.

"…A long time ago, there was a story that was passed down like a legend."

As Haro made noises, Audrey's voice directed itself at Banagher, who moved his face slightly.

"Once the Laplace Box is opened, the Federation government will reach its end."

Banagher was driven by a pulsating feeling and turned behind. He saw Audrey rooted over there, a figure in the darkness.

"This isn't something everyone knows of. However, something that involves the center of what they call society will naturally reach some people's ears somewhere. One must fear the Vist Foundation. They have the Box. Those that follow the Foundation will have riches and honors, and those who disobey will have death…"

It felt like a supernatural story. Banagher swallowed his saliva, but Audrey shrugged him aside as she continued to state calmly,

"Nobody knows what was inside that Box, but they knew it really existed. The Laplace Box was a form of convenience obtained from the government, an invisible pressure on the government's eyes. The most triumphant example is the Anaheim Electronics company. It single-handedly controls the military needs and public needs, and won't be pursued even when it was helping Neo Zeon. Without the backing of the Vist Foundation, it would be impossible to imagine that they would have such rights."

Banagher unwittingly used his hand to touch the chest of his jumper. The initials and crest of Anaheim Electronics was printed on it, and they left a rough feeling on his fingers.

"Cardeas Vist intended to hand that Box over to the "Sleeves"…Neo Zeon. The location was Industrial 7, the colony builder that was under the name of the Vist Foundation. However, the Federation army sniffed out signs of the deal and sent this ship and the Special Forces over. And then…"

That battle happened. Banahger sense that his body was about to tumble over as he used his hand to hold onto the pile of cardboard boxes.

"I had to prevent the Laplace Box from being handed over to Neo Zeon. I don't know Cardeas Vist's real intent. However, Neo Zeon still can't use that Box. Once that power that can topple the Federation

land in their hands, there will undoubtedly be a war that will be like the One Year War, causing devastation on both sides."

Banagher recalled the history shows he once saw on the television, the images of the colony landing on earth. It was an idea of 'throwing a colony down' that a colony in orbit was slowed down to act as a mass bomb. The military country controlled by the Zabi family, the atrocities of Zeon, the moment the megacity was wiped out, and how the landscape was changed as a result, bringing about all sorts of calamities onto the earth. There was no need for special technology and expenses. By manipulating the resources around them, they were able to cause a disaster that never happened before—*that's right, it's not difficult to destroy the world just like that.* Banagher abruptly thought.

With some imagination and madness to do it, it's not difficult to destroy the world. There are definitely many chances to start a war of total annihilation, but people probably haven't discovered them yet. If the Laplace Box contains such methods, and if they end up in the hands of Neo Zeon that is the descendant of Zeon…

"Neo Zeon hasn't obtained the Box yet, but since they know it exists, they will come for it no matter how many times. The same thing as yesterday will happen again. A war will start. We have to destroy it before it actually happens."

"Don't tell me, that is…"

There's no need to hear the answer. Audrey answered with her eyes.

"It's not the Box itself, but a guide to the Box. Cardeas Vist handed the key to open the Box, the "Unicorn Gundam"…that machine to you, his heir."

The last words Cardeas left behind and the words about the "Unicorn Gundam" everyone on the ship was rambling about started to echo in Banagher's head. He slowly floated around in zero gravity, leaning his back on the cardboard boxes. Audrey stared at him and twitched her long eyelashes slightly.

"I don't feel that the current world is perfect. We have a lot we want to say as well, but if we let so many people die…I think there's still a way to gradually change the world's thinking. Up till now, humanity has managed to survive like this. It's better not to have such a thing like the Laplace Box—"

"Who, who are you?"

I couldn't listen to everything you said. He said. Audrey's shoulders jerked slightly.

"It's like you know everything about Neo Zeon…it's like I'm listening to some great person. It's different from your voice in Industrial 7."

Audrey lowered her head and closed her mouth. It was the same whenever she faced him and raised some unreasonable requests; it was the same when she said that she did not need him, the helpless look she showed during that short moment after she finished her words. The wavering of emotions that were restrained showed that she was actually rather delicate. She was smart and had a strong sense of responsibility, but in contrast, those emerald eyes would not see anything else once she was determined. The side of her face that showed a slight smile when she called herself duckweed was alluring enough to drag him in. It was not simply because Banagher could resonate with her emotionally, but that he realized that there's a spark in the resonance to her existence.

Right now, Audrey did not have that charisma. Even as she pretended to talk in like an adult, it was the same. The way she held back by her position as she spoke covered her up. *Is it because she can't remain undefended against me once she feels that I'm necessary to her? If that's the case, I might as well be someone unnecessary to her.* "Let me hear your voice." Banagher said. *This alone won't be able to create a spark because I'm not smart enough to act based on logic.*

"I want to hear, not about what you have to do, but what you want to do. If you're willing to tell me…"

What can I do then? Banagher's voice softened as he spoke, and he was unhappy about his own sputtering as he waited for Audrey to speak up. *Logic doesn't matter. Just find something that allows you to find your passion. Find a passion that allows us to be together, that passion that can't be created in the disjointed world, that passion that can resist the icy cold world.* Banagher felt that no matter whom Audrey was, that would be enough for him to escape from here. *To save her, I have to bear the weight of the world*—even if Cardeas' words became reality.

Audrey lowered her eyes and clenched her fists, having finally showed an expression of realization. She stared at Banagher.

"I want—"

"What are you two doing?"

A cold voice suddenly rang, interrupting the rest of the words.

Banagher froze and at the door from past Audrey's shoulders, who in turn was stunned. With the light source shining from the corridor, Banagher could tell that it was Micott standing at the door.

"Being all sneaky over here…what are you doing, you? Pretending to be missing along with everyone, is there something you want to discuss with Banagher?"

Micott let out stinging words as she grabbed tightly onto the door frame. Banagher felt the icy expression from her eyes as he stood in front of Audrey. "I'll take to you later, Micott…" he said "WHEN'S LATER!?" Micott's loud voice echoed throughout the room, causing the skin to tremble.

"A lot of thing was messed up ever since this woman appeared here! Are you one of the terrorists allies? Now you're intending to trick Banagher? What are you planning?"

I just entered a trap I dug myself and forgot about—he had such a feeling. "I…" Audrey muttered softly, only to stop midway and bite her lips. Banagher saw this and instinctively growled back, "Micott, that's not right of you." "What…" Micott cringed back as her eyes showed signs of tears.

"The colony we lived in is ruined! Slyvia and Mario disappeared like dust! Even Anaheim Electronics was blown with the ground…do you think I can forgive her!?"

No response. He felt that Micott's response was the normal one, and yet felt that he had to continue to keep a secret. Both these issues bore down on Banagher's heart, and the thought of him being the worst traitor bored down on his heart. *I can't go back to Industrial 7. I can't remain in the days with the disjointed feeling. It's really a path of no return.* All sorts of thoughts appeared in Banagher's heart.

"If you're allied with the terrorists, I—"

She stared at Audrey with teary eyes and eked out a voice before stopping there. "Ah, over here." "Miss Micott, disappearing like that out of a sudden is really…" as they wondered why other voices came over from the passage, Takuya and Ensign Mihiro appeared at the door.

Takuya first noticed them in the room as he blinked and said, "Huh, Banagher?" Mihiro, who put his hand on Micott's shoulder, showed a shocked expression as she said with an absent-minded tone, "What are you doing here, Miss Audrey? Everyone's been looking for you." After a short pause, "Sorry, but I'm still not used to controlling the liftgrip." Audrey said the answer she had already prepared beforehand.

Banagher looked back in Micott's direction after seeing Audrey answer, and realized that they would be doomed if things were revealed here. However, Micott did not look at anyone as she merely shook of Mihiro's hand to leave the scene.

"Wait, Miss Micott!" Mihiro called out as she chased after her. Banagher too got onto the corridor and witnessed Mihiro turn around the cross junction. Takuya then got up from behind to clamp Banagher on the neck and whisper, "What exactly is going on?"

"Even if you ask…"

"I did help you speak up the last time, but actually, I still haven't accepted things yet."

Takuya put his hand on Banagher's hand and glanced at the door of the room where Audrey was in. Banagher's fingers that were placed on Takuya's arm shuddered slightly.

"Her lack of immigration record will be exposed once we get back to "Industrial 7". You better put an end to this before that happens."

Takuya quickly finished and released Banagher, stepping on the floor to leave. *He's not actually angry, but worried about me.* Banagher stared at the back of Takuya that gave this vibe and saw a glimmer of hope. He then met Audrey's eyes at the door. *Put an end to this—how?* As both their eyes gazed into each other's "You brats actually came all the way here!?" a rude grol rang through the corridor, and the guard showed a completely different expression as he stood at the cross junction.

Part 7[edit]

The reason why Daguza could not avoid that shadow completely was because he had to protect his lleft arm that was fastened with the cast. He quickly kicked the wall and barely managed to avoid direct collision. After seeing that person who lost her balance slightly, he gasped a little.

The person had slight wavy long black hair and long legs under her shorts. The girl who basically did not look like she was a member of the ship crew was the reason why he gasped. She probably did not use the liftgrip, but used inertia to move over. Daguza grabbed the girl as she looked like she was going to slam into the wall quickly and let her hold onto the liftgrip well.

"Excuse me…"

"No worries."

The girl did not look like she minded about this as she held onto the liftgrip and slowly moved. She was one of the civilians he met in the recreation room, the girl who brazenly said that her father was a factory owner. Daguza saw this girl who looked a little lifeless, completely different from before and mused in his heart: *To think that they'll let civilians move around the ship like that…* and sighed as he got ready to hold onto the liftgrip again.

It's worrying that the fracture's unable to heal because of long-term exposure to zero gravity. I want to hurry up and get to a place with gravity, but how are we going to let the ship move to "Lunar Two"? Daguza thought of that very bothersome Alberto's face and was about to think of a way as a troubled voice could be heard from behind. "Erm…"

The black-haired girl stopped in the middle of the corridor. The half-turned face showed a hesitant expression, and once their eyes met, it looked like she intended to avoid Daguza, who noticed that the girl's eyes were drenched in tears.

"There's something I don't know who I should talk to about…"

Despite being troubled, the girl said with a depressed-sounding voice. Daguza moved his hand away from the liftgrip.

Part 8[edit]

The metal door to the monitor room was pushed open. Conroy, who leaned the his big body on the terminal monitor, had his eyes half opened in a dazed manner.

"I want to connect with the ship's database archive. Can it be done?"

Daguza quickly spoke to stop Conroy before the grumbling about how he should be sleeping came. Conro''s expression changed the moment he saw the ID card that was obtained. "Please use it." Conroy said as he stopped his half-completed assignment and gave up his seat in front of the terminal. Daguza pulled the chair and swiped the ID on the card reader beside the computer.

Daguza typed in the 10-digit password he remembered on the keyboard with his free right hand. The log-in screen shown on the access page was the database network managed by the Federation Central Intelligence, a download right a Londo Bell ship would have. Of course, only those of cadre class could log in, and the important classified information were removed from here. However, it was an important treasure when searching for particular information—for example, the appearance of a terrorist or a fugitive. Daguza first chose

the picture comparison option, and entered the ship staff's database, entered the name and gender and let the program pick up the selected photographs.

"Are these the civilians kept on board?"

Conroy let out a surprised voice as he looked at the photo shown on the terminal. All the civilians had their face photos and fingerprint data collected before they were taken on board the battleship. "This may be it." Daguza did not actually believe that girl, Micott Bartsch's testimony completely without belief, but once she mentioned it, he did notice something. He had an impression that he saw this somewhere before when he saw that person. As the relation between those two was too sudden, Daguza's mind did not have time to actually think.

The forehead, eyebrows, eyes. The data match with the photo appeared in that order, and gradually formed a complete face. The search ended, and the face that was no different from the photo was shown on the matchup column. It was a front face photo that was secretly taken, CG repaired. The name was—

"This person is…"

Conroy let out a hoarse voice as he brought his pale face to the terminal. Daguza held his fingertips that looked like they were trembling, trying not to show any emotion, and briefly answered, "Keep it down."

"Don't take your eyes off 'her'."

That's all we can only do right now. Daguza gave this command to a still-puzzled Conroy and closed the database.

Part 9[edit]

The Captain's room was not a place a pilot should be entering unless there was an order. Besides, it made even less sense for a pilot to be welcomed by the captain so much if the pilot had not achieved such a huge accomplishment.

"Ah, you've arrived. Come now, take a seat here."

However, such an unreasonable situation was happening. Riddhe was prompted by Captain Otto's mysterious courteous smile as he sat on the sofa of the reception room. Right beside him was Squad Leader Norm, who was invited in earlier, giving an ugly expression as compared to Otto. Riddhe could not tell exactly what was going on as he was suddenly summoned in after being on standby, and could only remain cautious and wait for the unexpectedly excited Otto to speak

up. The officer room attendant wearing a white servant uniform served some cutlery for tea and poured red tea into the trio's cup.

"This is an actual produce from Earth. It's not cheap, but it's one of the few forms of relaxation for me. I normally bug my wife to let me carry this onto the ship. Here, have some."

The attendant left the room as Otto said with a very good mood. Riddhe glanced aside to check on Norm's expression, deduced the moods, and realized that there would be no problems for him to start drinking as he sat properly, took the teacup, and answered, "Yes! I'm tucking in.". Riddhe took the teacup, had a sip, and tasted the sweetness amidst the bitterness. "Ah, that's right." Otto suddenly patted his thigh as he said this. Riddhe barely managed to take a first gulp as he resisted the urge to spurt out the red tea.

"You're born on Earth, Ensign. I suppose things like this red tea from England aren't something rare?"

Otto chuckled while giving the vibe that he's forcing things. Riddhe saw Norm's slightly moving cheeks, understood that he intended to laugh with it, and pretended to give a smile as he answered, "No, not at all." Both of them gave empty smiles that stopped inside this reception room, giving the mood that something annoying would be discussed within this room.

"Then, there is no special reason why I invited both of you. I suppose you can understand the situation in our ship now, Ensign?"

"Yes…"

"Ever since the battle started, we had only two instructions issued from the Central Council. Retreat, and standby. I really want to assist in the colony evacuation, but since we are on a special mission from the general headquarters, we can't show ourselves in front of the media. We could only leave the colony after taking back the spare parts of that Gundam."

Shouldn't this be part of the Captain's jurisdiction? Riddhe really did not want to laugh with him as he put the red tea to his lips to avoid answering.

"We're hiding inside the shoal space region like this…but there's still no sign of reinforcements. It seems that Londo Bell has taken action, but just on usual alert. We can tell that the headquarters on Londenium have not grasped our location. Even if we want to alert Command, we can't communicate with them when we're under special orders even though we belong to them."

Otto, who took a sip of red tea, showed a faint glint in his eyes. At this moment, I thought of you." On hearing these words, *Here we go again.* Riddhe thought.

"If I'm correct, your father does have quite the high standing amongst the Central Council, correct? Ronan Marcenas. It's said that he's the chairman of the Settlement Issues Council, and also very active on national defense, a truly impressive important senator."

And an 'if I'm correct' to top it off. Riddhe thought. "That's correct, I presume?"

"I hope you can contact your father through a private message and raise the issue that our ship is isolated without any traces—"

"Please allow me to refuse."

Riddhe answered before he even heard the end. At this moment, he did not even look at Norm's face as he stared right at the blinking Captain Otto, trying to answer reasonably, "Isn't this against Military rules?"

"How can we send private messages during a secret mission? If it'll be against Military rule, just ask 'Londo Bell' for assistance, and things will be solved, right?"

"That's the hard part. If we send out an official request, we may be isolated by the headquarters and left out in the cold. This is the consequence of the magic of the Laplace Box'."

The Box—Laplace Box. This term that shut everyone up the day before caused Riddhe to quieten down.

"You heard of this before, so I'm not going to hide anything here. The chances of that Gundam-type mobile suit being heavily related to the Laplace Box are very high. The higher ups seemed to be keeping still while trying to decide what to do with that mobile suit. There are people who want to use this chance to get the 'box', and the people who want to restore it back in its original position; both sides are fighting it out. Well, basically, the army and Anaheim Electronics are having a tug-of-war here."

"Won't this be easy? We're soldiers, so let's just follow what the army intends."

"There are complicated costs and benefit relations involved in this. Basically, there are all sorts of people amongst the cadres in the Central Council, like those highest executive cadre members who intend to become senators and enter politics, and those congressmen

who intend to move under Anaheim once they resign…it's because of these people tussling with each other that reinforcements won't come in no matter how long we wait. Even as Londo Bell asks for reinforcements, a certain level will intercept. Right now, the "Nahel Argama" can be said to be a small-scale version of the being two different sides being in the same boat, but the Manhunters and the Anaheim employees. There are so many people trying to lead the ship…that's why.

Otto put the finished cup back on the plate, and heaved a deep snort. *I see. So it's a political issue?* Riddhe's body that half-gave up on Otto reluctantly cooled down, and he drank the red tea that had no taste left. *I understand this, but it's annoying even if this is the case. That unhappy damp feeling that covered the 'family' made it all the way here—*

"However, we might have a chance of surviving if your father can pull some means from within, like give a call to Londonium's Commanding Officer Bright Noa. If it's him, he will send reinforcements while letting people think that it's a patrol. With Senator Ronan's assistance, the Central Council will not be able to get in the way much."

"It's hard to say…he's someone who views cunning policies as his life. I can't guarantee that he will take action based on the hopes here."

"His cute son is on this ship too. There's no way he will leave you alone."

The shackles binding Riddhe's heart was about to be broken as he faced the nonchalant sounding Otto. He clumsily put the teacup back on the plate and intended to glare at Otto. "I'll ask for that too." However, the voice that was let out stopped his idea.

"I think I can understand how you feel, but there's no one we can rely on now."

Norm, who had not said a single word since just now, and had no intention of putting the red tea to his lips, was clenching the fists that were placed on his knees. "Squad Leader…" Riddhe answered as he saw his mobile suit squad leader who lowered his head and would not lift it back up, his voice stuck in his throat.

"If the reinforcements don't come, we won't be able to take revenge for those brothers who died. I can only ask of you this."

Norm's shoulders trembled violently as he lowered his head such that it was nearly hitting the table. Riddhe saw the shoulders that were trembling because of this anger and regret that was more than his, and

saw Otto, who swallowed his saliva as he witnessed this. He let out a sigh from deep within.

Part 10[edit]

There's no other choice. Riddhe returned back to his room and ended up spending 2 hours writing a mail to his father.

He had never sent a phone call for the past few years, let alone a message. His body did not have a function to communicate with his father, and he felt a chill when he started off with 'Dear Father'. He wrote the letter while his heart was basically in agony. Riddhe was really about to faint when he ended off with 'From your son Riddhe'. *Someone like me actually ended up writing a request for help from that dad—*

No outsider would be able to understand this mental trauma that was like forcing a painter to step on his own painting. He quickly finished the mail, sent it to the bridge, and felt a surging urge to kill Otto for merely giving a 'sorry to trouble you' formality on the surface.

Our ship will now be heading to an area where radar communication can work. We will be on second-level alert when leaving the shoal space region, but please remain in your own room, Ensign."

"It can't do if we make a request to the senator while getting his prince hurt!"

Otto gave a wink that gave the impression of a frozen face, and cut off the chatter linking from the bridge. To Riddhe, this might be a good thing. "DAMN IT!" Riddhe's outcry caused his soles to be expanded on the monitor, but luckily, this scene was not seen by the Captain. Riddhe stamped on the communicator panel and went to lie on the bed.

Soon after, the siren telling the crew to remain on standby could be heard, and the engine which sounded like an air-conditioner increased. This was the sound of the Nahel Argama being ready to launch. They were leaving the remains of the colony towards a place where they could send messages by radar—a place where the radar would not be affected by the debris. On hearing the noise that came with the jerking of the furnishings in the room, Riddhe thought in the heart: *Whatever you want. No matter where I go, the Marcenas' name will never let me go. It'll reach to the ends of the universe and surround me with its irritating damp feeling. The man who walks through that moisture leisurely will then give an arrogant wry smile and say: It's about time for you to become an adult. Humans have roles they should perform*

since the moment they're born. You shouldn't be having a role of such a character on the other end like a pilot.

Then, what's my role? Am I going to use my parents' protection as a weapon? Reclaim the mantle to my family to answer everyone's expectations? Do they want me to stay in this world where every corner is grey? Learn how to distinguish between black and white? Don't joke around. I want to distinguish between black and white with my own power. A pilot doesn't have a grey region. The superiority of abilities can decide life and death, and I survived from it. I tried my best. That's because I ran away from 'home' and never thought of relying on it once.

However—the actual battle from before proved that the biggest difference between life and death was luck. It taught Riddhe that the difference between sitting or standing when the god of death swung its scythe would decide things. The thing that decided these differences was the change in situation, and a pilot, a character on the far end of the spectrum, had no power to change the current situation. *This ship is asking me for the power to change this situation to break this deadlock. They're not asking for this pilot called Riddhe, but the direct blood kin of the Marcenas…*

He was tired. He had no motivation on wanting to escape to another place. Riddhe yawned as he noticed the thing floating his eyes, and widened his eyes that were about to close. The plane model that was placed on the table seemed to be floating because of the tremor from before. Riddhe grabbed onto the red baron plane model that was famous during an old century war, and let it float in the air where gravity had no effect. He thought, *Oh yeah, my beloved Grumman is still kept by someone else. I left it with that mobile suit maniac kid… Takuya, was he?* Riddhe got off the bed, stretched and moved towards the room door.

The civilians that were kept were kept at the recreation room in the same gravity block. *It was tiring to talk to that brat, but it sure is better to shake off my thoughts instead of being gloomy by myself.* Riddhe was rather excited about meeting Audrey again. He left his room and took his first step towards the recreation room as an intense tremor from the floor caused him to stop in his tracks.

Riddhe did not know what was going on. His body slammed into the ceiling, recoiled back onto the floor, and the corridor lights changed to the emergency red lights. Another tremor rocked the ship, activating the siren. The announcement from the operator was blocked by the explosions that rocked the ship, and a force that was 3 times stronger

than before caused Riddhe to fly off.

This time, Riddhe got into a protective stance and kicked towards his footing that was either the ceiling or the floor. *An enemy attack—and the ship took a direct hit. This is fast. Where is the attack coming from? There won't be an answer even if I think here.* Riddhe held onto the liftgrip that was jerking slightly and let his body glide towards the mobile suit deck.

Part 11[edit]

In this era where Minovsky Particles could render electronic weapons ineffective, the concept of guided missiles had long vanished from the battlefield. The times where guided missiles that would not let go of their targets, the era of the button wars had become a relic. This battlefield that could be seen before the Middle Ages was brought up to space as both sides fought it out while being able to see each other's locations. The mobile suit that was at the front acted as a cavalry, while the ship at the back took on the role of moving its base. The missiles in this era would be less effective than even flaming arrows if the ships do not engage in close combat.

Even so, production of long-ranged missiles had never ceased even till this point, and the missiles viewed as important armaments for navigating ships. The concept was similar to the cavalry battles of the old ages, where throwing weapons were often viewed as treasures. Even though they could not use radar navigation to do precision attacks, the missiles would fly right at the targets once they caught sight of the enemy's locations and determine the course for impact. The missiles, if used with conjunction with the rockets that could not be controlled when fired, would be very threatening in terms of distance and destructiveness. In particular, two direct hits from large anti-ship missiles could sink a battleship.

At this point, these anti-ship long-ranged missiles passed through the shoal space region and hit the debris of the colony where the Nahel Argama was hiding in. based on initial observations and the L1 basic coordinates that were derived after some time, it showed that 12 missiles were shot out from a Rewloola-class. 4 missed their target, while the remaining 8 hit the outer wall of the of the old colony debris, igniting the explosives that were filled within.

Blueish-white flashes continued to appear and expand, each expanding as the impacts collided with eac other. The 8 fireballs converged with each other, covering the debris of the colony. The supersonic impact caused the outer wall to be partially shed off, and the massive heat melted the materials. The common drainage built

underneath were ripped apart, and the energy that crushed the buried dirt to break through the other debris, spurting through the inner walls.

The debris field had still had artificial land mass since the War before, and for a moment, looked to be surrounded by smoke. It was an impact tremor that could be felt from right below, as the dust that was on the building or ground—small particles that piled up after many years of floating in space—danced around. Also, the flash that appeared from underground was leaked out through the gaps of the earth plates, showing a chessboard-like network that spanned 1km of debris. Red flames shot out a second later like lava flowing, eroding the debris in the vacuum, and depicting the scene of uprooting perfectly.

The Nahel Argama had kept its scout camera ball, which was used for outside surveillance, back in, and intended to leave the debris. This was a shocking thing to them. The scout camera ball was a complex sensor that was operated through long cables, and was originally tossed outside amidst the debris to act as a coordinate where the ship could see its blind spot. The Nahel Argama kept it to move, and

basically lost its eyes that could see what was going on inside the debris for the time being, while the missiles seemed to rush here at this precise moment.

The debris that was floating in the silence of vacuum suddenly corroded, causing a large amount of debris that flew to hit the bottom of the Nahel Argama, and the uprooted street lights and half-wrecked electric cars hit the ship directly with blazing trails. The giant ship that was almost 400m long was obvious shaken as all the items that were not fastened within the ship were all flying. The crew started bouncing several times between the ceiling and the floor. The gravity block was no exception as Banagher and the dining tray were sent flying, Takuya and Micott slammed into the wall, and Audrey held onto the foot of the table. Mihiro beside them took the internal phone of the recreation room, but was knocked together with the receiver into the air by the continuous shaking. Banagher grabbed onto Mihiro's waist to catch her, and both of them slammed together into the monitor panel on the wall.

Daguza was slammed into the ceiling of the corridor, while Alberto was curled up like a ball as he fell in the room he made his own. The cranes and the frames let out metallic cries that sounded like they were going to snap. Gibney and the other maintenance soldiers were moving all over the place in response to this. Norm, Riddhe and the other pilots leapt into their own cockpits. There were equipment that could not be used, starting with the anti-air machine guns that took direct damage from the debris, but the bridge had to confirm the damage of the ship later. They were already on standby, but First Officer Liam and the others who had not put on normal suits were thrown off the chairs. Captain Otto ended up having his head crash into the ceiling.

Cries and grunts caused the cries and all the noise to be messed up within his skull that was numb with pain. The scolding hot debris grazed past the front window of the bridge, and numerous red vestiges entered their eyes. It looked like the top of an erupting volcano—

"ENGINE ACCELERATE! EMERGENCY RETREAT!"

Liam finally managed to sit back in her chair and shouted out this command without waiting for the captain to make a decision. The steering crew member recited the order and turned the steering wheel into the designated direction. The bow of the Nahel Argama lifted by almost 90 degrees, and Otto, who saw that the ship was heading up through the colony debris, recognized Liam's immediate decision in this situation. He also had the thought of accelerating forward to

escape, but the rubble was scattering, and they were trying to limit the hit area to the smallest possible. The Nahel Argama left the colony debris and managed to escape with the scattered debris hitting the stern of the ship.

“CHECK THE NUMBER OF CASUALITIES! HURRY! WHAT’S THE AIR SURVEILLANCE DOING!?”

Otto shook off the heavy impact his head took as he started yelling. He received the normal suit from the warrant officer waiting on the bridge. “There’s no sign of any enemy around!” The sensor operator’s growl entered Otto’s ears.

“The guess is that the attack came from outside the radar range.”

“Impossible. Look for it. There’s definitely an enemy disguised as a debris out there nearby.”

Otto slipped his legs into the normal suit and pulled the zip. The sounds of the rubble hitting the ship could still be heard. The remains of the colony below them were gradually crumbling as he saw the saw of it scattering everywhere through the monitor. He then turned his eyes on the searching sensors located on the left flank of the ship. There were direct hits from the anti-ship missiles—and it was not just 2, 3 hits. There was definitely an enemy ship that fired countless missiles from very close distance. It was less than a minute since they kept the scout camera ball and reduced their detection ability. It was basically impossible for an enemy ship to get close, fire missiles and retreat back outside the radar.

“It’s not guided missiles from the radar era we’re talking about here. It’s impossible for missiles to be so accurate once they’re fired and control is lost, and from that distance too…”

Otto unwittingly said these words, and felt a chill on his back. *An attack from afar. If there are no signs of enemies nearby, this is the only thing we can deduce. If we use outer space as a background, the enemy ship will merely be a speck of dust. There’s only one way to shoot from outside the radar range and into a 1km radius full of debris. That will be to deduce the absolute coordinates of the target and clear all obstacles in the way before shooting off all the missiles.*

That’s right. The enemy knows where we are exactly. I carelessly used the main cannon just now because of the trouble with the Salamis-class rubble and revealed our location—

“We’ve been had.”

Liam, who looked like a bear as she was wearing the normal suit, whispered beside the captain seat. Otto saw the tense look from the side of the First Officer's face and wordlessly looked forward. "High-heat object, closing in rapidly!" Shocked, he lifted his head once he heard the voice of the sensor operator.

"4 targets, coming in from above the ship. Estimated time before reaching, T-minus 3.3"

It's different from the first wave attack coordinates. We're surrounded. Otto temporarily left aside this worst case scenario as he asked, "Missiles again!?"

"No, this movement is of a mobile suit, but…"

The stuttering voice showed fear. Otto looked at the back of the sensor operator from behind Liam's shoulder.

"It's unreasonable for it to fly through the debris at such a speed. A unit leading the squad is moving in 3 times faster than the mobile suits behind!"

The sensor operator lifted his head from the control panel, looking rather pale as he turned to the Captain's seat. "What did you say..?" Otto felt his muttering mouth widen as he stared at the sensor image.

The unidentified unit left behind the units at the back as it flickered mysteriously. *It's a completely different unit from the 'Sleeves' mobile suits before, including that four-winged*—Otto heard his skin give off goosebumps as he unwittingly grabbed onto the armrest of the Captain's seat.

Part 12[edit]

The attacking speed of that red mobile suit was definitely far above the Geara Zulus that were following behind. The high-output thrust unit installed on the back was a reason for this, but that was not all. The red mobile suit was also skilled and stepping on the debris in its course, utilizing superb technique of recoil and thruster jet use to move forward.

The unit immediately floated through the countless metal debris and stone rubble that were far larger, crossing each side, leaping on each debris piece, shot out thruster jets at full power to the next debris piece, and kept going through the shoal space region at this accelerated dash. Of course, the debris would move with the course, so it was not able to gain a proper footing beforehand. It predicted the course of the debris beforehand, chose the next landing point before

having footing, and chose the shortest path to the next target. Even a high-capacity computer would not be able to compute in time, and this was an amazing skill that was like climbing a cliff by jumping off falling rocks. The pilot of the red mobile suit—the “Sinanju” could do it however. The angelic-looking wings of the thruster unit flared as the red mobile suit leapt through the torrent of debris like stepping stones, elegantly dancing through space.

As it moved forward, the colony debris that hid its trails was crushed as a Federation ship emerged from the chaos of debris. The face of the masked pilot wrinkled with a smile as he saw the white ship emerge into the underworld. His hands were wearing thing gloves as he held onto the control sticks, while his feet that were covered with boots stepped on the pedal. The pilot was wearing a crimson red uniform that had gold ornaments, and was not wearing a normal suit.

“Let me see the capabilities of that new model Gundam then!”

The bushy blond hair felt vitalized as it swayed gently in the air. As the “Sinanju” passed through the torrent of debris, Full Frontal chuckled in the cockpit.

Chapter 3[edit]

Part 1[edit]

(The bow will be directed in a new direction. Opening the hatches for the 1st to 4th catapult. Mobile suit squadron, get into launching position.)

The voice of Operator Bellard could be heard as the catapult hatches opened. Riddhe moved the “ReZEL” unit 008 forward, let the machine step on the catapult, and could not help but let out a call of amazement as he looked at the scene outside.

“This is…!?”

The 3rd catapult deck was extend out into the vacuum—if the Nahel Argama’s shape could be described as a wooden horse, the right foreleg would be the exposed catapult. A large amount of debris was surrounding them in the midst of the current, as blocks of all sizes floated towards the stern of the ship. Occasionally, debris the size of a

mobile suit would graze past the catapult. It felt like swimming in the midst of remains. However, the Nahel Argama itself was moving forward, and the reason why this misassumption would be thought of was because they were leaving the collapsed colony remains, and the scattered rubble flow looked like they were moving from the back to the front.

If we moved in the same direction as the debris, the relative velocity on both sides will be negated, and the surface area of the ship being hit could be reduced to the smallest possible area. This would be a welcomed arrangement for the mobile suit that would be shot out from the bow, but can we leave the ship safely? If we slam into a debris that comes from behind when we fly out, we'll be squashed immediately… no, before I even worry about that, let's think; how am I going to catch sight of the enemy in this messy space? Riddhe swallowed his saliva as he looked around the debris that kept floating around. (We chose a very bad time to launch), the voice from the wireless communicator caused him to close his mouth. It was Lieutenant Commader Homare of Romeo 004.

"It's rare that you can remain on standby inside the ship. Is this really alright, young lord?"

"I'm not convinced about letting you guys handle this, Lieutenant Commander."

He answered this dig with a dig back. It was something small, but this small action alone gave him a peace of mind. (Oh, you sure dare to answer back). Riddhe heard the Lieutenant Commander as he felt that he could finally be alone. (That's all for chit-chat). Squad leader Norm's voice interrupted.

(All units are to form elements after leaving the ship. Juliet 2 with Romeo 004. Romeo 008, follow me.)

The element, as its name would imply, was about using the smallest number of members when forming teams, active teams of 2s. Norm was the attack unit, and Riddhe was the defense unit. Thus, Riddhe's unit had a long-distance support beam launcher equipped. Everyone was launched out, but it was unexpected that they would only have 2 elements. "Understood." Riddhe suppressed the timidity that crept up in him as he answered.

(There are 4 enemy units closing in. We have similar numbers, so calm down before going.)

Squad Leader Norm seemed to read his thoughts, and behind him

(Path clear. Please launch). Operator Bellard's voice rang. Riddhe stared at the torrent of debris that showed no signs of stopping, and grumbled "What path clear…?". (I can hear you, Romeo 008!) The Operator's voice could be heard, causing Riddhe to cringe. "Got it!" Riddhe grumbled in his heart after answering, thinking that it would be great if Mihiro was the operator.

Looks like she's still not released from her task to take care of the civilians. Speaking of which, I asked her out to see a movie. What was the type of movie she said she doesn't really like? Riddhe thought in an absent-minded manner. He intended to think of that mini-tank's round eyes in his mind, but suddenly ended up thinking about another pair of eyes, and was shocked by it.

Those emerald-colored eyes that looked like they were about to suck him in; those eyes that did not look like they could relax and look at him, the side of that awe-inspiring face overpowered the rest as it appeared in Riddhe's mind, causing him to be shaken by the lack of understanding of his mindset. *Why, why am I thinking of her face when I may end up dying—*

"What the heck am I doing? Is it love at first sight?"

He unwittingly said it out. *Are you serious?* Riddhe asked himself. (… Don't say it.) Operator Bellard's seemingly disgusted musing could be heard, "Ah, no, I don't intend that…" Riddhe was frantically trying to explain, but was shut up by a booming voice (Norm Basilicock, Romeo 001, launching!)

One could see Squad Leader Norm's "ReZEL" unit 1 glide up from the 1st open-air catapult deck that formed the bow of the "Nahel Argama". The "Jegan" unit 2 then shot out from the 4th catapult at the bottom of the ship. Riddhe grabbed onto the control stick. *Let me survive this before thinking about the rest later. I won't die, and I definitely can't die. I must come back and meet Audrey. If I'm really in love, I'll naturally find out where I should go.*

The countdown timer display reached zero. *That's right, I'll definitely survive.* Riddhe muttered in his own heart as he got ready to launch. At this moment, he suddenly remembered. *Is that letter to my father sent out yet?*

Part 2[edit]

(Riddhe Marcenas. Romeo 008, launching!)

The vague voice through the wireless speaker rang. "Ah, it's Ensign reading." Banagher heard Takuya say this as he stared at the monitor

panel on the wall showing the blue mobile suit with a transformable booster unit on the back glide on the catapult and fly into vacuum.

“Someone you know?”

“It’s the Ensign who had the model plane. I never saw him again after this.”

The biplane model that was fastened on the table with tape could be seen in the direction Takuya was pointing. That was something Takuya did after managing to hold onto the model tightly in the middle of the tremors, and prevent the same thing from happening. “Oh, that one…” Banagher answered he turned his eyes back to the monitor panel that as 10 inches. *That’s the young pilot who was chasing the model on the mobile suit deck. He sure feels like he will doubt easily.* As he thought, Riddhe’s machine could be seen flying off, leaving behind the blueish-white thruster jets on the monitor.

That machine dodged the debris surrounding the ship like flowing water, and gradually disappeared from the screen. His movements compared to the previous ones were not lackluster…or rather, it felt like that course he chose was the one that would use less effort. Banagher brought his face closer to the visual presented by the camera that was fastened on the catapult. “You guys can watch this later!” Mihiro growled, causing Banagher to cringe.

“Hurry here and put on the normal suits.”

Mihiro carried in 4 normal suits from the locker room and said to them with a sharp voice. She herself was covered in the white military normal suit, and was giving a look of a soldier who would not have time to pretend to be calm in a real battle. “Alright.” Banagher answered Mihiro as he looked back at Audrey and Micott.

Both of them had been in 2 corners of the wide room ever since they returned back to the recreational room, and they never intended to look at each other as they silently put on the normal suits even in this situation. The way they deliberately changed into the normal suits while turning their backs on each other gave an ominous vibe. While it was okay on Audrey’s side, it would not be weird for Micott to explode anytime soon—

“Try and hold yourself down and don’t leave this place. I’m going outside to check on the situation.”

Mihiro probably was not in the mood to notice the atmosphere as she hurriedly left the room while being tripped by the trays on the floor. Banagher looked at the normal suits that were left on the table, stared

at the backs of the girls who were hesitantly changing, and was really not motivated to go to them as he decided to stay in front of the monitor panel. “Oh, this launched from the 2nd catapult.” Takuya switched the channel of the monitor as he mused with fast breathing. Banagher and he watched the back of the transformable mobile suit that got ready to launch.

It was not a misjudgment this time. The ship was attacked by the enemy, and the monitor was showing a real battle. *It’s the enemy Neo Zeon. Will that four-winged mobile suit come back again? “Leave this place with me"* Banagher recalled that cold tone as he glanced at Audrey. Her expression was stiff, but there was no sign of anxiety or fear on her face as she inspected the normal suit. It was like the time when they were facing each other in the dim storage room, the stare that refused from thousands of miles away was looking at something other than this place. Those emerald eyes were showing passive thoughts of taking it one thing at a time, her emotions suppressed by a sense of duty. *The ones attacking may be her allies—*

The reports announcing that they were leaving the ship were buzzing. “Please, you guys…” Banagher was prompted by Takuya’s earnest voice as he stared at the transformable mobile suit. The giant figure on the catapult deck looked to be smaller, and just when it was about to reach the end of the catapult deck, a pink beam appeared like static, sweeping through the image in a diagonal direction. At that moment, a white light was emitted from the mobile suit that was about to leave the ship, and the monitor suddenly turned black.

The room lost its light at the same time, and the noise of an explosion that rocked the air within the ship surrounded him. The floor was bumped by several meters, and Banagher was knocked into the ceiling for some reason. Amidst the darkness, the cracking sound of something being crushed echoed through the ship; the noises of breaking glass and compressed metal could be heard. Screams and moans echoed through the room. Banagher reached out his outstretched arm, and kept hitting the walls and the floor without grabbing anyone. At this moment, Banagher’s nerves were all numb with pain as he moved his arm, trying to grab something. Suddenly, the emergency red alert flashing in the room dyed the dark room red.

The monitor image was regained, and the visual from the same angle as before was shown on a corner. The image of the catapult deck, stretched into space, was captured by the camera—but the runway that should appear there disappeared. What appeared there was a dark void with debris that were moving in the opposite direction, shining. The pink beam that flashed again left some burns, and the

darkness devoid of stars had two, three lights of explosions.

We got sniped…? Banagher stared at this pink beam that was obviously from a mega-particle cannon, took what he deduced and tried to let his aching body stand up. He looked around the room that was surrounded in red light, and checked the locations of the other 3 that were collapsed in the different corners of the room. Audrey was holding onto the holding, kneeling; Takuya had his head stuffed into the flower bed, and Micott, who had her lower body inside the normal suit. Banagher saw that the trio seemed to have escaped fatal injuries, and he was about to move to Audrey who was unable to stand up as a chilling premonition came down his spine without warning.

Something floated past the screen behind him. The red vestige was etched in Banagher's eyes. That was not the vestige of a beam, but something that was with physical mass. This certain thing had enough killing intent to cause goosebumps was closing in on this ship. That thing was giving off a heavy presence, arriving here with killing intent that went through several layers of armor.

Banagher tried to look for the red vestige on the monitor. The meteor-like shadow did not appear again as a new explosion appeared, creating a dazzling white light in the vacuum.

Part 3[edit]

Even though the light filter took effect, the flashes that immediately appeared still dyed the window white, robbing the bridge members' sighs. Otto collided into the normal suit locker at the back, barely managed to climb onto the captain's seat rest, and shouted with all his strength, "WHAT'S THE SITUATION!?"

"it seems that a "ReZEL" that was launched got sniped. The left catapult deck took severe damage.

Operator Bellard growled back as he gave a brief damage report from the damage control room. The peripheral view of the ship was shown on the monitor panel above his head, and the damaged parts were blinking red. The portside catapult deck of the Nahel Argama was blown to bits as it was caught in the explosion of the sniped ReZEL. It lost the left foreleg of a sphinx. Otto saw that his ship looked like it was half blown off, and felt that what he saw was a moment of darkness. He put on the helmet of his normal suit tightly, and raised his volume, saying, "EVERYONE, CHECK FOR DAMAGES!"

"WHAT'S THE ANTI-AIR DEFENSE DOING! WE GOT AN ENEMY ON US!"

The 2,600 close-ranged defense artillery, and the main cannon that had a further range than the enemy unit had not been fired. “But adjustments aren’t…!”Otto angrily told off the cannon operator, who answered with a bone-chilling reply. They were trying to estimate where the enemy unit was, even though at this moment, trying to hold off the enemy with bullets without actually worrying about hitting was common sense in actual battle.

“NOW’S NOT THE TIME TO BE AIMING! KEEP FIRING!”

Otto let out a roar through the wireless network to all the units in the ship. He may have ended up embarrassing the cannon operator, but that was all. Anyone would lose functionality after being trained in precision and competing for it. Otto reflected on the time when he viewed ship efficiency as the most important thing and felt regret over it. at this moment, countless inception fire let out flashes outside the window.

The 60mm machine cannon that was meant to counter mobile suits let out a trail of fire of light bullets. Also, there were 2 main cannons equipped on the ship, one about and one below—the 2 twin-barrel mega-particle beam cannons let out sublight beam bullets. The secondary cannons hidden within the two domes on the flanks shot out beams, and the Nahel Argama shot out a screen of fire all over the place, but this was already a slow reaction. The debris that got hit exploded, and as countless bits of light were flickering around the ship, new direct hits rocked the inside of the ship. Otto got back to the captain’s seat, and several seconds later, he was bumped up and knocked into Daguza, who entered the bridge. As Daguza used his injured left arm with the cast on to grab the big man, Otto roared back in a voice loud enough to match the impact noises, “THERE’S ONLY ONE UNIT! KEEP FIRING!”

There was only one enemy that entered the ship’s range as the other 3 units were outside the attack range, intending to watch the battle from the sidelines. *What enemies?* Otto lifted his head to look at the monitor image, seeing this before returning back to the captain seat and fastened himself with the attachment at the back. *Our machines that are fighting it can’t even match its movements.* The remnant exploded after the direct hit from the beam, spewing hot debris, and the enemy unit got over to other heat sources to easily get through the fire. Such excellent reflexes—no, this was not a skill a human could pull off. It was like the mobile suit knows all the blind spots of the ship without any data help, dealing damage to the Nahel Argama which lost its foreleg.

“Who in the world is that guy…” As he unwittingly mused, the umpteenth tremor rocked the ship again. The body of the ship was rocked by several meters, and the G-force hit the body that was on the Captain’s body. (The rear main cannon took severe damage). Before the voice of the report rang, Daguza muttered, “The enemy doesn’t intend to shoot the engine room.” Otto opened his closed eyes. Daguza grabbed onto the captain seat’s armrest, his helmet reflecting the explosions of light outside.

“That guy wants to neutralize us before taking the Box.”

Daguza did not look away from the window. *The enemy’s trying to wear down our ship’s fighting strength to make us surrender while avoiding damage on the engine room that may sink the ship. That’s the kind o enemy we’re facing.* Otto felt his face turn pale, and argued back, “Idiot, how can such a stupid thing happen! We’re talking about a single mobile suit trying to do this…!” He then caught sight of Alberto, who rushed into the bridge, from the corner of his eye. “Mr Alberto, this place is dangerous!” He ignored Liam’s warning that was earlier than Otto’s, and pulled the chair of the sensor. He handed a record card to the sensor operator and turned to Otto, saying, “Use the data inside to check.” Otto was overwhelmed by Alberto’s massive killing intent…or rather, thoroughly fearful face as he gave an expression allowing them to do so. The sensor operator then took the record card he received and put it into the console’s slot. Soon, the data that was read was shown on the sensor visual, and it started matching with the unidentified machine they were fighting.

In less than two seconds, a match was indicated, and the photo of the unidentified mobile suit was displayed through CG hologram. The 3-dimensional picture and the data was shown. Otto silently watched the sensor image. It was a mobile suit that had the smart body line of a Federation unit and also the curves of a Zeon-type mobile suit. It had a one-eyed head, a thruster unit on the back that looked like wings, and the machine was a dazzling red—

“So it’s the “Sinanju”. The enemy’s the “Red Comet” here…”

Alberto backed away from the console and muttered with a trembling voice. Otto felt the wavering air of uneasiness inside the bridge, and parroted back, “The Red Comet…?”

“It was two year ago. Our company developed a prototype mobile suit that was robbed by those guys during transport.” Alberto’s eyes could not remain focused as they moved, and he continued, “The Federation units that were sent to track it down came back in defeat, and the one viewed as the mastermind behind it was Full Frontal, that person

called the second coming of the Red Comet—Char Aznable."

Liam seemed to be enlightened as she lifted her heavy-looking eyelids and looked over. "I heard of it before. That red mobile suit single-handedly took down two Clop ships, called the pioneer of the "Sleeves."

"That one called "The Lingering Soul of Char" who created a commotion that time, huh? But…"

Impossible. No, Otto himself wished that this situation did not happen. The red mobile suit was like a hallucination amidst the flickering explosions of light in space, and Otto clamped his glove that was drenched in sweat. The fallen king of the old Zeon Empire, Char Aznable, took the reins during the second Neo Zeon War as the heir of Zeon Deikun. He was the man at the center of the conflict called "Char's Counterattack". *Even if it were a joke, that Red Comet who vanished without a trace during that final battle could not have survived till now.* Some idiot must have been using Char's name after seeing that he might not have been shot down.

But if that's the case, what's with the overwhelming prowess of this enemy in front of us— "The color is different, but this machine is one of the two that were stolen." Alberto's next words caused Otto to swallow his stone-like heavy saliva.

"The RX-0 is designed from this thing's data! This isn't a mobile suit that can be taken down with some half-baked mobile suits! Hurry up and run away!"

Alberto's pale face was dyed with the explosion of light outside the window at the next moment. The blunt and heavy impact pierced through the bridge, and the bodies that were held down by the chair attachments could only shake. Otto grabbed onto Alberto's normal suit just when Alberto was floating around, dragged him to the Captain's seat with all he got, and yelled, "SEND THE RELEVANT DATA TO ALL UNITS!" The echo and the voices of damage reports rang, and the alarm indicating that the enemy was closing in sounded even more rushed.

"THE ENEMY'S NOT SOME DEAD PERSON OR ANY DAMNED THING! IT'S JUST A MACHINE THAT COMES FROM SOMEWHERE! WE'LL DEFINITELY HIT IT IF WE CALM DOWN AND AIM! TELL THE MOBILE SUIT SQUAD THIS!"

Even If we want to run away, we'll just be hit from the back in this situation. Otto fought back the feelings in his heart that were

overwhelmed by the term “The Second Coming of Char”, and stared at the beams that were all over the place outside. Daguza seemed to have some thought as he passed by Otto, while the explosions showed him leaving the bridge silently.

Part 4[edit]

The combat data was immediately sent out, and the mobile suit squad received this data through the radar. The unknown CG image model was corrected by the data, allowing the pilots to grasp the shape of the enemy mobile suit. However, the situation did not improve in this situation.

Even after knowing the shape, it was meaningless if they could not catch sight of the enemy. The “Sinanju” continued to fly behind the messy debris, not leaving any opening for the Nahel Argama pilots to fight it head on. The red mobile suit grazed past the dead angle—it was too late when everyone realized this, and broke through the defense lines, and shot a new beam at the ship.

The Nahel Argama took a direct hit, giving off a white-hot fireball. The pure white ship that lost its left catapult was tilted largely to the side. The anti-air fire continued on, ripping through the torrent of debris to bits. The red mobile suit, which was not even equipped with a shield, moved in in arcs amidst the numerous explosive lights. The arm that had the logo of Zeon on the sleeve, the legs that looked like some crustacean shell, the two propeller tanks on the back all help guide the Active Mass Balance Auto-Control rotor, allowing the red giant to move amidst the vacuum on its own.

No matter how different the frame or the power generator was, mobile suits of the same size should not have a difference in output. The “Sinanju” continued to toy with ship with hit and run tactics, while the Nahel Argama pilots did not break formation as it insisted on basic tactics and continuous suppression of the enemy. The Lieutenant Commander’s Romeo 004 got shot down with the catapult jet, and the remaining forces that were left were 2 “ReZELs” and one “Jegan”. These three machines all started to search out the enemy, attack and support, tracking the red machine that was appearing and disappearing in the midst of the torrent of debris. The movement courses of the enemy suit would naturally be limited with the involvement of the Nahel Argama’s fire. The pilots believed that they had a chance since there was no attacks from any Psycommu weapons.

The one in charge of tracking down the enemy was the Juliet 2 “Jegan”, while the attacker Romeo 001 started to double team it. The

defender, Romeo 008, was equipped with a beam rifle as it remained in a position where it could see the three machines. The 3 machines continued to dodge the debris that was moving in from irregular directions as they waited at the opening where the enemy would appear. The enemy's mobile suit had outstanding AMBAC capabilities, but there had to be a limit. They had went through multiple moments when the enemy would dodge attacks that would have normally hit. The Nahel Argama pilots had been waiting for this moment, for several minutes after the Nahel Argama took a direct hit. The "Sinanju" was slowed down a little, perhaps because the debris floated in its path. The pursuing "Jegan" used this chance to rain fire, and the "ReZEL" 011 got right in front of the "Sinanju" before shooting a mega-particle from the beam rifle. The "Sinanju" was restrained by the front as it stopped. Riddhe, who was piloting the "ReZEL" 008, squeezed the trigger.

"Got you!"

The power generator hidden inside the beam rifle roared and shot out a large beam. The mega-particle beam that could match a battleship main cannon blew aside the debris in a straight line, vaporizing through space dust as it rushed at the enemy. However, the "Sinanju" managed to dodge that attack at the critical moment. It was fighting the other two machines, but it could still dodge a sublight beam that came from somewhere else.

The burning debris was scattered all over the lace, having taken the direct hit. The "Sinanju" kicked at one of them and flew through the perimeter at an abnormal speed. The "Sinanju" rained fire on Riddhe's suppressing fire, and then hid its own heat source amongst the hot debris.

The beam rifle lacked a consecutive fire function. It would need ten seconds to recharge for the next shot. Riddhe's "ReZEL" had to back away, and the "Sinanju" snuck below the "Jegan" that was closing in on it. The "Jegan" could not use the heat sensor and rely on the visuals, but the enemy was right below it—the only blind spot of the 360 degrees all view monitor, right below the linear seat.

"Is this guy a Newtype too!?"

This is an enemy more ferocious than the psycommu equipped 4-winged, and without openings. The voice of the "Jegan" pilot was drowned out by Squad Leader Norm's voice "Right below!". The "Jegan" pilot wanted to step on the pedal, but the beam rifle in the "Sinanju"s hand let out a flash, and the pilot's consciousness faded.

The beams came out from the rifle barrel, obliterating the “Jegan” from the bottom in rapid-fire mode beams. One hit the leg, another crushed the hand, and the “Jegan” limbs that were hit seemed to dance in space like a spoilt puppet. The head was crushed by the internal pressure, and the core reactor was ignited. The armor let out hot air, and the shockwave ripped through the metal skeleton inside as the now deformed machine was swallowed in an extremely hot ball of light.

The light of explosion that expanded lit up the surrounding debris, causing the “Sinanju” red frame to float in mid-air. It easily dodged pasted Norm’s shots and again vanished amongst the torrent of debris. Norm could not help but have goosebumps as his impression of other unique mobile suits he saw on the battlefield before was mixed in. The “Zeong” and the “Sazabi”, the machines that were piloted by the legendary Red Comet—

“Is that the real Char…!?”

He felt tense after feeling that similar pressure. The Nahel Argama let out flares of being hit behind the two “ReZELs” that were trying to regroup.

Part 5[edit]

The light of explosions that happened more than 60km away looked like light-colored illumination. The cold flashes that were sharper than the stars appeared for a short moment, causing the debris floating around the shoal space region to appear for the time being. The thin thread-like lights passed by, and the bright pink light that cut through the blueish-white ring of light was shot through, followed by an expanding orange fireball that signaled an enemy mobile suit’s explosion.

“I said it before, didn’t I? There’s no need for us to get involved.”

It’s impossible to see such a beautiful scene anywhere else. Angelo Sauper said as he saw the image of this light feast from the all view monitor. Ensign Sergi, who was approximately a kilometer away, twitched the “Geara Zulu” slightly as he watched the battle with the rest of the escort squad, answering somewhat hesitantly, (Yes…)

(But is this really okay? There’s not just one enemy there. We should be giving covering fire, shouldn’t we…?)

“That’ll just be a nuisance. We just need to stay here and clean up any enemies the Captain missed.”

Even so, there’re only two enemy suits left. There’s no room for the

escort squad to intervene here. Angelo raised the long-distance beam launcher that was equipped on the right manipulator, and rested the 20m long weapon on the machine's shoulder. Angelo got rid of the instantaneous fire mode, intending to watch the battle from afar, and wryly added, "But the Captain sure is evil for not leaving such small work to us."

"I never squeezed the trigger once ever since I followed the Captain into the battlefield."

(Not even once…?)

Sergi's mobile suit on the enlarged image of the window moved its monoeye to look at Angelo, seemingly looking for an expression or so. Angelo looked at Lieutenant Cuarón in the opposite direction and saw that he was intending to just watch as he put the cannon on his shoulder. Angelo answered 'yeah' as he put his hand on the helmet.

"I feel that this is an honor of us, the Escort Squad."

Angelo took off the helmet and lifted the bangs on his forehand. Angelo himself thought that this was too much, but he did not care about it any further. At this distance, the beam that would be fired here would either be a ship cannon or a high-energy launcher cannon. It would be instant death if any of them were hit. Sergi's machine showed a puzzled attitude as it turned its monoeye back to the front to stare at the battlefield again. Angelo looked over from the corner of his eye and continued in his heart: *You'll understand later.*

There won't be any wild enemy shots flying over. The enemy's head over heels trying to set a firing range. Anyone who's trying to snipe us from that will be taken down by the Captain if there are any signs of it. Someone might think that there's no need for an escort squad, but that's not true. There are many things we can do to help the Captain, like protecting the battlefield the Captain is on, or watching out for any reinforcements. It's this feeling of trusting and being trusted that allows us to be able to deal with any enemy more than anything else. The Captain himself acknowledged that we're the fighting strength supporting him on the battlefield.

Leaving our lives to each other and gaining unsurpassed happiness and absent-mindedness is more precious than anything else Angelo imagined seeing the "Sinanju" in the midst of the crossfire of beams. *The enemy mobile suits will be immediately dealt with, the ship cannon will be taken down. The enemy ship will have nowhere to go, and they have to hand over the Laplace Box soon. No matter what it is, it'll definitely big enough for the ship to hold. Once we reclaim it, we'll*

just put it back on the "Rewloola" at the back.

I can still enjoy this numbing and enjoyable feeling before then. Everything about the battlefield the Red Comet rides on—Full Frontal, is pretty. There is a large ball of explosion shown there, and Angelo muttered: *I'll enjoy this even if I die.*

Part 6[edit]

The umpteenth impact rocked the ship, and Banagher grabbed onto the foot of the table that was creaking. The falling rocks-like noises rang, and the sounds of floating bodies crashing the floor could be heard as the red lights shining inside the room flashed brightly.

(Third Ventral Fin on the right took heavy damage!)

(Emergency response team, hurry up with the airtight assignment on C block!)

(It's the 4th VLS! A missile fell in from the suspension and we got a staff crushed down there…! OI! KIKUMASA, KIKUMASA!!)

What could only be heard from the open speakers in the ship were cries and roars. "Is this ship…going to be alright…" Takuya muttered, and Banagher did not rely as he looked around the recreational room that was covered with a thin amount of dust. All the things that were not held down were scattered all over the place, and the monitor panel on the wall was showing cracks. He spent all his concentration on guarding himself against the tremors. He and everyone else had not put on their normal suit. Micott was grabbing onto the sofa, not moving at all, and on the opposite side, Banagher saw that Audrey was intending to carry the spacesuit. He intended to move there when the tremors stopped. It was unknown when the airtight wall would be broken through if this kept up. They had to make sure they had their air.

Banagher gathered up 2 normal suits that were scattered tucked them under his armpits. His eyes met Audrey as she was doing the same thing, and he felt a very suffocating feeling. The shocks that happened next forcefully made them look away from each other. It seemed that the fixators were spoilt as the flower pots were tumbled, the dirt and the lids that was pried open by the shock landed on the floor, and the bits of dirt were scattered on the floor. Banagher's vision was blocked by the dirt that went flying with the impact again, and shouted, "HURRY UP AND PUT THE NORMAL SUITS UP!"

Micott lifted her head from the sofa, and Takuya snuck out from the back of the table. Banagher saw that Audrey was going over to Micott,

and intended to move over to Takuya as he heard the sound of the door being opened behind.

He looked back, and saw two men walking into the room silently. Both men wear wearing deep beige spacesuits that were sticking onto themselves, while their right legs had gun holsters. Banagher was shocked that the two men were wearing different clothing from the ship's crew for a short moment, only to realize that the face under the helmet was a familiar one as he shut his mouth that was about to open after being suppressed by that sharp stare.

Daguza's eyes did not show any signs of cordial he had with others for a moment before. The knife-like stare in the eyes stopped Banagher's movements, just like the first time they met in this room. During this time, the other hulking man grabbed Audrey's upper man.

That person intended to bring Audrey right in front of Daguza as he pulled her with enough force that did not allow for any arguments back. "What are you…!" Audrey groaned as she wanted to shake off the hand, but her face could not be seen as her left arm was held down by Daguza's left arm. Banagher was shocked for several seconds and hurriedly tried to get in front of Daguza, only to be immediately stopped by the hulking man in front of him.

Banagher could see the side of Audrey's face behind the hulking man's back that she was listening to Daguza whispering. He saw her shocked expression, and all signs of resistance on her immediately vanished as she looked at Daguza with a silent expression. Daguza looked back at Audrey's angry or remorseful look, while Banagher did not know what was going on as he could only watching their faces. Daguza ignored him as he had his arm around Audrey before stepping out. Audrey moved the arm that touched her away and went towards the door on her own.

"Excuse me…" Micott spoke up with a barely audible voice. Daguza stopped to glance at her, and then looked away to continue walking. Banagher saw Micott lowly her pale face, and turned his eyes back at Daguza, who was passing through the door with Audrey and shouted, "Wait!"

"Why are you doing this? Where are you intending to bring Audrey to?"

Daguza merely glanced behind, not even saying anything. He nudged Audrey on the back lightly just when she was about to stop, and both of them continued to move forward. Banagher's head immediately felt hot as he stamped on the floor.

“Wait…!” Banagher angrily reached his arm out to grab Daguza’s waist, and for a short moment, thought that his fingers reached the normal suit. Daguza nimbly reached his right arm out to push Banagher’s forehead, and the force that pushed him back practically sent him sprawling.

“Do not leave this place until you’re order to. Got it?’

The hulking man said. Banagher saw his somewhat guilty looking expression as he looked back and used his hand to feel the hand to feel the head that took heavy damage. The closed door had already blocked any sight of Daguza and the rest. Banagher, Takuya and Micott were the only three left inside the room. The tremors that rocked again caused the silent uneasiness to be broken up.

What the heck was that? Banagher could not comprehend immediately and only intended to chase after them, only to feel a chill when he heard the words “It’s about that girl.” Micott’s hands that were holding onto Haro tensed up as she stared at the floor with a depressed look.

“It wouldn’t be like this if that girl wasn’t around…”

Haro fell off from her hands as her knees collapsed weakly onto the floor. Banagher could only feel the anxiety and regret choking him as he saw Micott collapse like that. “You said it out…?” Banagher squeezed out these words as he grabbed Micott, who lowered her head dejectedly, with both hands.

“WHAT DID YOU SAY!? WHAT DID YOU TELL THEM!?”

“I TOLD THEM THE TRUTH! I TOLD THEM THERE WASN’T SUCH A GIRL IN INDUSTRIAL 7. I TOLD THEM THAT SHE MIGHT BE WORKING WITH THE TERRORISTS…!”

Micott yelled as she lifted her head. Banagher felt even more hurt by her teary eyes that made her look like she was going to collapse, rather than the words themselves. He let go of the hands that were grabbing Micott’s shoulders. *I have no right to tell her off. Everything was all because of me.* He tried to accept this unacceptable truth and vented all his uncontainable rage into his clenched fists. Banagher subconsciously head for the door.

Takuya picked up Haro which dropped on the floor and gave him a wavering stare. *This is a path of no return.* Banagher remembered these words that appeared in his mind and passed through the automatic door. “Don’t go!” A voice that was like a cry came, and at this moment, a soft feeling surrounded Banagher’s waist.

“You can’t go…stay here.”

Banagher could not look down at Micott’s expression as she wrapped her arms around his waist with her face on his face. He was shocked by this unexpected heaviness, could not move his legs and held his breath as he touched Micott’s hands. He avoided the normal biological reaction to this warmth and softness, felt this sense of guilt he had never felt before, and gently opened the hands that gave him warmth.

“…I’m sorry.”

Banagher had nothing else to say as he stepped on the floor while the tremors rocked his footsteps. He ran past the arc shaped corridor and left the recreational room without looking back. “WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING!?” such a cry of anguish could be heard, seemingly piercing through Banagher’s heart from the back.

Part 7[edit]

The charge countdown showed 0, and the signal indicating that the charge was done rang inside the cockpit as Riddhe cocked the trigger of the beam launcher to the bottom.

“Go!”

The mega-particles were released as they went through the accelerated convergent ring. The pink beam ripped through the vacuum as they broke past the debris and flew towards the target. However, Riddhe did not have time to check whether it hit the target as he use the thruster jets to help him escape before the recoil from the firing stopped.

On the battlefield, stillness meant death. Shooting out this beam would be the same as telling the enemy one’s own location. Besides, the enemy was the “Red Comet” who decimated the defenses of the Nahel Argama alone. Even if it were the real Char, the fact was that it was an abnormal enemy they were dealing with after a few minutes of skirmish. Riddhe read the radar signal from Norm’s unit, and let his unit move around in a messy accelerated trajectory as it flew through the sea of debris. At this moment, the beam came from a completely unexpected direction, and the flash and the intense hit struck the cockpit of the “ReZEL” 008.

The noticeable G force slammed the body, and the attachment gear at the back let out a creaking sound. Riddhe thought that his eyeballs were popping out as he unknowingly put his hand on the helmet. He caught sight of a spark flying from afar as he spun. The fatal G-force faded off by the time he realized that it was his suit’s right leg that was

blown off by a beam, and he barely managed to let the one-legged mobile suit steady itself.

The functionality of the AMBAC was decreased by 26%. Riddhe glanced aside to look at this status that was explained mercilessly and stepped on the pedal. That red mobile suit was basically fighting multiple enemies by looking at the situation. He would not carry out unnecessary actions, and he was basically treating the debris and the enemy units as a hostage. He did not personally make the kill, but stopped attacking so that he would not focus on just one enemy. Riddhe would definitely be eliminated if he let his unit with lowered mobility stay at its position.

Newtype, experienced pilot, no, these aren't it. He's an expert. This simple term appeared in Riddhe's mind as he felt the strength supporting him weakening. That mobile suit shook off Norm's pursuit as it closed in on the Nahel Argama again. The ship was wrecked by countless hit and run attacks, and the screen of bullets it let out was less than two-thirds the usual. *How are we going to stop that guy with just two units—?*

"If this keeps up, everyone will…"

Riddhe unwittingly said as he gritted his teeth. He worked his mind that seemed to be covered in cowardice as he held onto the control stick again, only to hear a voice from the wireless radio (Do you hear me, the attacking enemy unit there?)

(Cease your attacks immediately. Our ship has captured the prisoner Mineva Zabi. I repeat, our ship has captured the sole heir of the Zabi family, Mineva Lao Zabi.)

The broadcast was made through the open channel frequency—but it was not the voice of the Operator or the Captain. "Who's that…?" Riddhe mused inadvertently as he looked through the monitor at the Nahel Argama. The pure white ship that was firing on the monitor on the far end where the debris continued to swim through, and it was as big as a little finger. (The image will be shown on Channel 582. I hope you can confirm it.) The voice from the wireless radio overlapped with the image. Riddhe, who was looking for the enemy, let his eyes stare at the monitor as he set the wireless frequency to 582. The communication window then showed the face he was familiar with.

Riddhe's heart raced as the hand holding onto the control stick trembled. Prisoner, Zabi Family, Mineva. These terms brought an onrushing surge of hues in his mind as they exploded. The face of the girl entering his eyes started to shake violently. His lips were sealed

tightly as he stared at the emerald eyes who were not wavering. That face yesterday gave him the courage to deal with the situation fearlessly when it entered his stare—

(If you do not cease your attacks, we will not guarantee the safety of Mineva Zabi. We have already prepared terms of negotiations, and we hope for your reply.)

The voice continued through the wireless radio. Mineva Lao Zabi, the sole daughter of the Zabi family who led the Republic of Zeon under Zeon's name. She took the throne during the First Neo Zeon War at a tender age of 7, but disappeared after the war. There were rampant rumors of her death, but the government continued to search for this princess of the fallen empire secretly. *The rumors also said that she was the star leading the Zeon remnants, the "Sleeves"…it's this girl?*

Riddhe could not understand. *Her name's Audrey, I definitely may have fallen for her on first sight.* Riddhe stared at the girl on the window, repeated the name Mineva Zabi that had nothing to do with him, and held his breath because of the image that was captured from the far end. The fire that blazed suddenly stopped as the Nahel Argama's rain of fire stopped.

Riddhe did not know the whereabouts of the red enemy suit, but there were no signs of new beams or thruster jets. It was obvious that this message reached the enemy unit and stopped the attack. (This is Romeo 001. Will the bridge please explain the situation?) Riddhe left side Norm's suppressed call as he stared at Audrey Burne's eyes. She showed no signs of fear nor doubt as her emerald eyes continued to look forward, still giving off the awe-inspiring look through the window.

"Mineva Zabi…she's, the princess of Zeon?"

The girl on the image remained silent, and the bridge made no response to Norm's unit. Riddhe floated around this battlefield where time had stopped, not knowing what to think

Part 8[edit]

(I've checked the footage.)

The clear and cool voice echoed through the ship, causing everyone in the bridge to jerk. Otto saw Operator Bradley turn around to nod, used his eyes to tell him to maintain this line, and heard the voice of the pilot he was hearing for the first time.

(I am Captain Full Frontal of Neo Zeon. Let me hear your request.)

The communication channel was not too bad as Minovsky Particles

were not scattered. It naturally felt like the voice that had been heard many times through news or military footage—the voice of Char Aznable, and Otto held onto the handle of the Captain's seat as he muttered, "So even the voice is the same…?" as he turned his eyes around to see the bridge that was only left with emptiness and cold chatter, raning from Liam, who showed heavy anxiety in her eyes as she got up from the First Officer seat at the console, to the steering crew member and the weapons operator. Alberto held onto the empty command seat right beside the Captain's seat, his fat face shuddering as he widened his eyes in shock as he stared at the communication panel. Operator Bellard was sitting there, and the girl wearing the purple shawl was standing silently between Commander Daguza, who was wearing a deep beige norm normal and his assistant Officer, Lieutenant Commander Conroy—her body half-blocked by them.

The girl had been mistaken for an ordinary civilian ever since she was taken in from Industrial 7 due to lack of chances to meet directly. She closed her lips, her clear green eyes were focused on a single point, and the expression could be seen through the server monitor. She did not even show any signs of anger on her shoulders, let alone fear in this environment that felt like it was going to be an electric jolt whenever she touched. She was definitely not a citizen that could be randomly seen, Otto admitted. She had a certain special thing about it. Perhaps it was the thick sense of self-pride, or some unique trait that she was born with or raised to have. If she were the descendent of the family that ruled Zeon, this would explain why people would recognize this…

But why, why was she on this ship? Daguza, who barged into the bridge in the midst of the chaotic battle, just took control of the communications panel like a robber and did not even make a single explanation. The enemy had already responded to their calls, and they could not call in the guards to whisk Daguza out. Otto stared at the back of the girl in a nightmare-like state. "We hope that you will cease your attacks and retreat immediately." Daguza spoke into the mic as everyone stared at him in a terrified manner. Conroy put his hand on the handgun holster in the meantime to scare off Liam, who was trying to get up

"We can guarantee Mineva Zabi's safety like this."

(You're not handing her over to us?)

"You can assume that there is still room for negotiations. However, we will like to add an extra condition, and that is that this ship has to be moved to what can be deemed a safe place."

(I see. So she's not a prisoner, but a hostage?)

The red mobile suit's pilot—Full Frontal spoke with a sneer, causing Daguza, who was holding onto the microphone, to show signs of tension on the side of his face. Otto saw the stare from aside, and seemed to recover as he looked back at Liam. He put his helmet with hers while not making a noise. "Are you checking on where the electric signal is coming from?" Otto whispered. Liam looked up at the sensor screen and answered,

"We detected the location, but with so many debris…"

"It's impossible to snipe, right…?"

The plan was to use the communication panel to grab attention and strike when the enemy stops, but it seems like Daguza's plan was read by the enemy earlier. Otto stared at the main screen that showed the countless debris hiding the enemy's mobile suit, and then felt a chill when he heard Frontal's voice (There are too many uncertain factors if we want to consider this a negotiation.)

(There is no evidence to prove that the image is showing Her Highness Mineva herself.)

"If you are suspicious, how about you come onto our ship to see for yourself?"

(That is a way. But in that case, I will like to ask your ship to move along with us until our side feels that it is a safe place.)

Frontal said with a calm voice. *He doesn't play along with the opponent's rules and makes up words that will ensure that things go his way when there's an opening. What a smart man.* Otto thought. *Leaving aside whether he's the real Char, this man knows very well how this game called negotiations is done.* Daguza seemed to have the same feeling as he showed some signs of anxiousness on the side of his face as he answered, "You're really cautious for a man called the Second Coming of the Red Comet!"

(Our side is deemed by yours as a terrorist organization. We'll naturally be timid if we aren't accepted as an army, or when the international laws aren't suited for us.)

"We'll respect human rights."

(Nobody will bother hearing that from the Special Forces who were deployed to a civilian colony. Besides, you are talking while holding a hostage.)

They were caught in his flow. Frontal did not let Daguza go with his speechlessness as he continued with a steady voice, (Then, our side will raise a request).

(Our side hopes that you will hand over the item you confiscated from the “Magallanica”, and all the relevant data regarding the Laplace Box.)

Alberto, who was clinging onto the Commander’s seat, bent himself forward. As everyone held their breaths, Daguza asked, “The price?”

(The journey back will be safe. I wonder if you will believe it?)

“I can’t say that I don’t believe you, but I can’t do so. Our side doesn’t have the thing called the Laplace Box.”

(Your ship should have already reclaimed a Gundam-type mobile suit.)

“That is a Federation property. It has nothing to do with the “Box”.”

(Our side will determine this. If you can’t accept this request, your ship will be sunk.)

The voice that seemed to express something that was not a threat, but a fact, struck as a gust that froze the air in the bridge. Daguza ignored everyone’s pale faces as he said, “Are you going to ignore the prisoner’s life?”

(I said that I can’t verify that it is Her Highness Mineva herself. I don’t have to reply to any negotiations with uncertain terms.)

Frontal answered calmly. He raised his jaw silently, seemingly ignoring the girl who closed her eyes while seemingly indulging in emotions as he coolly answered through the wireless radio, (I’ll give you 3 minutes to consider.)

(Once this time is up, and if I don’t get a beneficial reply, our side will sink your ship. I hope you can make a wise decision.)

The electronic broadcast was interrupted before Daguza could answer. Daguza spaced out as he held onto the microphone, while the girl lowered her speechless face. At that short moment, nobody intended to speak up as the bitter silent time descended upon the ship.

They had to break up this silence in order to accept this situation and try to neutralize it…but how were supposed to accept this situation? The enemy called the Second Coming of Char, the girl called Mineva; there were too many factors with unknown reliabilities. The only thing certain as of this point was that their current fighting strength would not

be able to match the enemy. Even if they wanted to stall the negotiations, they had no idea of the true identity of the Laplace Box either.

Otto also did think of simply granting the enemy their request, to hand over the mobile suit they had no idea of. But he could not let himself agree with this. He was a Federation soldier, a captain who did not want any of his subordinates to die more than anyone…*however, would this wishful thinking show the incompetence of a commander? Who has the right to force 300 passengers to die with you just to hide a secret with an unknown truth*— Otto stared at Daguza's back as he forgot to wipe the sweat off his face. "This is a bluff." The ECOAS commander grabbed onto the microphone so tightly he was seemingly going to break it as he looked at Otto before glancing aside.

"There's no reason why they would not come to save the guiding star for the Zeon remnants."

"Not really."

Daguza swallowed the words he was going to say next, probably because of the girl Mineva's unexpected words. The still air spread around like a ripple as everyone in the bridge looked over at her.

"Full Frontal is the man who they say may be Char, the orphaned son of Zeon Deikun. There's no reason for him to risk his life for the Zabi family, the enemy of his parents."

The girl, who may be Mineva, ignored the stares of the group around her as she did not show any signs of wavering on her fact. Daguza showed that he was overwhelmed by this presence for a short moment of time as he answered, "These words show that you're Mineva Zabi herself!" and threw aside the microphone to draw a M-92F automatic handgun from his holster. He pointed the gun at the girl's temple in front of Operator Bellard, who swallowed his saliva.

“If that were the case, this will be more obvious. It’s impossible for Frontal not to save you if he wants the Zabi faction amongst the Sleeves to be obedient.”

“If that’s what you believe, continue with your useless negotiations. However, the ruler of Zeon isn’t as naïve as you think, you know?”

She did not seem concerned with the gun that was pointed at her as her eyes full of will were staring at Daguza. It was a tone that could not be expected, and that stare of hers would make people obey unconditionally; these factors proved her background more than anyone. Otto swallowed his saliva as he stared at this girl that was definitely Mineva Zabi.

“The winner and loser has been decided. Logically, it’s a soldier’s duty to minimize our allies’ damages before this. If it were a Zeon soldier, he will consider whether to get rid of anything related to the Laplace Box in the meantime.”

Daguza’s eyes twitched slightly as the hand holding the gun was

shuddering slightly. As everyone continued to stare at this unmoved Mineva, Alberto seemed to realize something as he said “That…that’s right.” And floated over from the commander seat to the duo.

“She’s right. Let’s destroy the Unicorn’s electronic spare parts and hand it over to them. We just need to surrender.”

Daguza and Mineva did not move their sights that were staring at each other as Alberto got between them and said,

“That’s a key, not the Box itself. If we destroy it, the Box’s safety will—”

Daguza clicked his tongue as he looked over at the communications panel. Conroy took action at that moment as he shut Alberto’s mouth from behind. Mineva narrowed her eyes too as she stared at the microphone Daguza was holding and the communication panel. They deliberately chose not to cut the line to let the enemy know that they were serious, and in this case, they leaked out information they did not expect.

Conroy put the gun on Alberto’s head as he continued to struggle while not knowing what was going on. He saw that no one in the bridge was raising their handguns, and as Liam wanted to take action, his gun was instinctively pointed at her. *Not good*— Conroy showed this expression as he showed no signs of backing down. The crew of the ship showed changes in their expressions. Otto growled for everyone to calm down, only for Mineva to suddenly laugh and sigh.

“This really feels like what the Federation itself will do, but what will you do? Commander Daguza Mackle?”

Mineva gave a wry stare at Daguza and continued,

“If you have the courage, destroy the Box and kill me. Everyone here will die, but it will be a blow to Neo Zeon once they lose the Box and me.”

Daguza’s forehead was sweating, and Mineva’s lips gave a taunting smile.

“Or are you going to let everything get snatched away by not doing anything? You only have a minute left to hesitate.”

Daguza took a deep breath through his nose and pointed his gun at Mineva’s forehead. The expression on the side of Mineva’s face had disappeared as she clenched her fist. *Stop it, don’t do anything. this is her plan.* Otto got ready to get up, but was shocked by another voice, “You’re talking like that again. That won’t do!”

The opened bridge door showed a boy with a bandage on his head. “Why aren’t you wearing a normal suit…!” The boy wearing the work jumper got past Liam who said this as she blocked his way and moved to Mineva. He was one of the civilians kept on board—no, the boy who piloted that Gundam. He got to Mineva while getting in the way Daguza in the way Otto thought of.

“Audrey, you’re just forcing others and yourself down the path of despair like this. just leave this place.”

It was an expression that showed no sight of anything else. The side of Mineva’s face that showed no sight of cracking sparkled “Banagher…” as she muttered.

“You shouldn’t be involved in these things. Stay with us.”

Banagher grabbed Mineva’s hand and intended to leave the scene. Mineva managed to steady her body that was about to be dragged away as she used all her strength to shake off the boy’s hand.

“Audrey…!”

“I am Mineva Zabi, not Audrey.”

“What are you saying? You’re Audrey. Whether you’re lying or not, you’re Audrey Burne to me.”

To her, this may be the first time she got rebutted like this. Mineva gasped as she lowered her head slightly. Daguza told off the boy who intended to grab her hand again, “Stop it!”

“This isn’t a time where kids’ logic can work. Leave this place.”

“You’re saying that I’m a kid…then, what’s Audrey?”

“She’s an important person of Neo Zeon, different from you.”

“No way! If I’m a kid, so is Audrey. Is using children as hostages what adults should be doing!?”

The voice that was released from his entire body shut Daguza up as if it was blowing apart the still air. Otto felt that his slow-witted head got hit in the back of the head as he stared at the boy called Banagher. He was shocked by this kid who was younger than him as he stared at the side of his face before looking away. At that moment, the voice from the wireless radio rang, “Time’s up.”

(Let me hear your ship’s response.)

Everyone stared at the captain, and then at Daguza. Daguza remained

silent as he did not move the automatic handgun in his hand. *It's already…not, we never had a choice to begin with.* Otto and Liam nodded at each other, sent messages to every department to continue battle, and again looked at the side of Banagher's face.

We don't actually have much hope out of this, but amongst these adults who can't move, he's the only one who saw the exit. This feeling did appear in Otto's heart.

Part 9[edit]

The microphone in the air swayed with the gust blowing from the air conditioner. Daguza had no intent of taking it in his hands. His left hand was held in a cast, and his right hand was holding onto the handgun as he just stood around without doing anything. Something like a handgun here would not be of any use.

Audrey too lowered her head as she remained silent. Banagher looked around this bridge that was not too big, waiting for someone to say something. None of them did, and none of them met Banagher in the eye as they were all focused somewhere else, looking at each other. The only one who met him in the eye was the man sitting on the captain's seat, but he would not answer Banagher's stare. Neither Daguza, Alberto, nor any of the passengers—

Why aren't you doing anything? Why are you still remaining silent? What's with this burdensome silence waiting for someone else to speak up? As Banagher thought about this, he looked back at Audrey, and the voice from the wireless communicator declared, (I understand.)

(Our side will sink your ship.)

Only these words were said as the line was cut off. After a beat, the man who looked like the captain growled to the entire ship "IT'S COMING!"

"Anti-air artillery! Mobil suit squadron, intercept on your own."

The hulking female officer grabbed onto the console and started giving instructions to each department. The remaining crew all got to their stations as the bridge got buzzing. Once the unique cogs started to spin, they will unite to cause the large structure to work— however, they would not start or stop on their own. Banagher had his hand on the back of the operator's seat, taken aback by the buzzing that was completely different from before, and let his listless stare reach the window in front of him. *Soldiering is a job too.* Banagher had such a thought in his mind again as he asked himself, *What should I do?*

Soldiers had different duties like those workers in a factory, and even the captain was one of these cogs. This ship, the Nahel Argama, was a gear of a large organization called the army. If that were the case, what would be the thing moving the cogs? The Generals? The Prime Minister of the Federation government? Or Anaheim Electronics? No, Alberto would be fulfilling the role of a cog, and he gave the vibe that he had no right to make decisions. Even the important person to Neo Zeon, Audrey, could not say what she wanted to say because of her own predicament, so it may be that all the higher-ups were the same. If everyone was an individual cog that feared the Laplace Box, who would be the person who wanted to protect it even if it meant using a hostage? Would that mean that this thing called an organization itself had a will that demanded humans to obey?

The beams continued to fly outside the window, and the explosions of debris lit the bridge. *This is too stupid.* Banagher silently stared at Daguza as the captain and everyone were growling and giving commands all over the place, and yelled, “CAN’T YOU JUST GIVE THE BOX AWAY!?”

Audrey lifted her head. If Neo Zeon got hold of the Laplace Box, there would be another great war—that may be the case. But so what? Nobody knew its true identity, and there was no certain proof that Audrey’s worry would become reality. “If you want everyone to die over something you don’t even know what it is—” Banagher emphasized, “Then, can you bear responsibility?” Daguza felt stiff as he opened his mouth, and could not say what he wanted to say.

“If in the end, the power hidden in the Box is something like that, and if it ends up killing more people, how are you going to apologize to the dead and their relatives? How do you intend to compensate them?”

A jolt happened below their feet as Banagher’s soles floated away from the floor. The beams continued to fly outside the window, and the expanding lights of explosions lit half of Daguza’s face. He looked away from the silent Banagher and said to the subordinate beside him “Keep calling the enemy” and wielded his handgun. The subordinate who had the size of a wrestler looked like he recovered and nodded as he grabbed the microphone floating in the air.

“Cease your attacks, or Mineva Zabi will be executed. This isn’t a threat.”

The sound of the impact overwhelmed the stiff voice as sirens and damage reports roared all over the place. The subordinate continued to call the enemy, and Daguza, who had his gun pointed at Aurey, had no expectations of what this would do. The captain and everyone else

who were focused on the battle in front of them continued to attacking while ignoring their own hostage, just fulfilling the roles that were decided for them. They all responded with the tasks they were given, the fixed roles, options—other options would appear if they had only changed their perspective a little, but none of them were willing to move there. The weight of the term called responsibility had sealed off their eyes and mouth just like how it was at this point.

This is why the adults can't express their true thoughts, Banagher suddenly thought. *The more they obey their duties, the more they will succumb to their responsibilities, and they will gradually lose sight of everything around it. And once they find a situation where nothing can work, they will push the responsibility onto someone else and remain silent. They shunned the responsibilities by making it rather vague, saying that they had no rights or authority, only caring about what's in front of them and saving themselves. If the world is destroyed before of this, the adults will definitely say that they don't have the power and rights to save the world.*

If I want to save her, I must have the realization to bear the weight of the world—is this how it is? So these hurdles that obedient people without malice build up are the weight of the world? Banagher was not hoping for anyone to do anything at this point as he stared at his palm.

The palm that had not fully felt the meaning and pain of work was covered with a mere thin layer of skin. Banagher did not feel this hand could bear the weight of the world, but it could touch Audrey, it could touch her stubborn delicate body and give warmth to her. If this was something Banagher had to do, he would be willing—

"…We just need to hang on through this situation, right?"

Banagher muttered and lifted his head.

"If we take down that red mobile suit, there won't be any need to take Audrey as a hostage, right? I'll do it!"

Banagher glanced aside at the stunned Daguza and turned away. He felt Audrey's stare from behnd him, but if he stopped, he would be unable to move due to fear. Banagher dashed out of the bridge without looking back.

The heat on his body was gathered at his temples. Banagher was driven by a pulsating heat as he undid the bandage on his head and took the elevator down. He put his hand on the inside of the cubicle and pressed the button that led to the mobile suit deck. *What do I intend to do? The moment Banagher closed his eyes and asked*

himself this, the door that was nearly shut seemed to clamp something.

Alberto, who was in the normal suit, appeared on the other side of the elevator door that was opened. He put his hand on the door, let his stout body slip in, and chuckled at the frowning Banagher.

“Hold on a moment. I remember you’re called Banagher, right kid?”

The face with the helmet on closed in as the door shut. Banagher clenched his sweaty fists.

Part 10[edit]

The Nahel Argama fired in all directions, raining an endless torrent of large flashing sparks. The debris that touched the explosive lights let out a chain of explosions, leaving a feast of light in the shoal space region.

The red mobile suit—the Sinanju got between this feast as it continued its attacks on the white ship. The orange fireballs flared as the Nahel Argama’s fire weakened slightly. Riddhe saw that the red enemy suit appeared whenever there was reflected light from the explosions. It would disappear instantly after appearing, and the thruster jets left a trail of light in space.

“You! If you weren’t…!”

Riddhe let his own mobile suit that lost a leg transform into the Wave Rider mode and stepped on the pedal. The G-force from the acceleration struck his body, and the tiny debris that struck the mobile suit let out unpleasant noises. It would be over if Riddhe slammed into a larger debris, but he did not care as he continued to fire the beam rifle hidden inside the shield. “BACK OFF!” Riddhe yelled.

“IF YOU WEREN’T HERE, WE WOULDN’T HAVE TO CARRY OUT SUCH A DISGUSTING BATTLE. SOMETHING LIKE THIS, SOMETHING…!”

The “Sinanju” flew from one piece of debris to another, seemingly mocking the trail of fire that rained on it as it dodged. *Using Mineva Zabi—the girl who was simply Audrey to him is basically what a bad guy will do! Who cares about whether she’s the last heir of the Zabi family? What about us who confronts terrorists with hostages?*

“SO WHAT ABOUT THE BOX! BECAUSE OF THIS STUPID THING, EVERYONE…!”

The suit transformed back into the mobile suit form and fired the 60mm

Vulcan cannons on its head. Riddhe aimed for the red mobile suit that was flying side to side amongst the debris, and let the “ReZEL” fly further forward. *Damn it, I got all too excited.* His excited brain thought as he raised the beam rifle that had only enough power to last for a few more seconds. At the moment the countdown reached zero, the “Sinanju” spined around to dodge, turned back, and raised its beam rifle to shoot at Riddhe.

There’s no time to dodge. I got too close. I’ll get massacred. Riddhe clicked his tongue as he saw a passing beam graze by the “Sinanju” horizontally, messing its flight path.

Riddhe immediately took action to retreat as he let his mobile suit leap aside. Then, Norm’s unit closed in with the beam as it charged towards the “Sinanju”, and Riddhe felt that his heating body cooled down a little.

(Calm down, Ensign Riddhe! Stay in order!)

Norm’s voice echoed through the wireless speaker as he drew the beam saber and attacked the “Sinanju”. The “Sinanju” too drew its beam saber as both sides had an intense clash of blades, giving off sparks in the vacuum.

(It’s about time for me, but you’re different. You better live even if you have to bite on stone. You still have something you have to do…)

The high-heat particles let out 2, 3 flashes of light, showing both units clashing with each other. There was no room to intervene, and his beam rifle was still charging. (Don’t mind me, just shoot!) Flustered, Riddhe heard Norm growl.

(If you don’t want your comrades’ sacrifices to be in vain, you have to…)

The sudden static covered up the words that followed. A ball of explosion appeared in front, and the “Sinanju”, which stood in the light like it was bathed in blood, appeared on the monitor. (Squad leader Norm…!) Riddhe called out as his mind went blank, and for the time being, he could not move his body. The broken arm from Norm’s unit was sent flying over, grazing Riddhe’s unit, and the wide-opened hand robbed Riddhe of the deepest part of his soul. The monoeye of the “Sinanju” flickered rudely, seemingly pitying the enemy suit that was injured.

“You bastard…!”

Riddhe squeezed out the remaining ounce of strength he had to force

back the pressuring feeling from the red death good. *I'm a pilot. If I have something I have to do right now, it'll be to sink this enemy mobile suit in front of me.* Riddhe ignored the words Norm left in his heart as he put his fingers on the trigger of the beam rifle. The siren indicating that the charge ended seemed to ring coincidentally.

The "Sinanju", with its flickering eye, rushed through the black clouds that showed the remains of Norm's suit, and got under the machine. Riddhe pretended to lose sight of the enemy as he waited for it to close it. *It's not like that guy's beam rifle has infinite ammo. If there's a need for it to make sure that the Nahel Argama can't fight back, it'll definitely get as close as possible to let out a fatal damage. This will be decided within a range of 20km. I'll be happy if I can take revenge here, even if it means dying together*.

The distance between them was shortened, and Riddhe caught sight of the enemy mobile suit through the sensor image and switched the position of his unit the moment the enemy went past 20km. The "ReZEL" used its balance verniers on its entire body, turned 90 degrees back and faced the "Sinanju" head on…it may look this case, but the machine itself could not maintain its anticipated angle as it tilt to the left like it was tugged aside.

The loss of the right leg caused the AMBAC function to err. It was too late by the time Riddhe realized this, and the enemy mobile suit that it once caught sight of went slightly aside. Riddhe immediately stepped on the pedal, but he knew that it was too late. *I'll be hit, the direct hit would be arriving; I'll not be able to repay anyone's expectations. I will die like a target.* These thoughts of fantasia appeared in his mind, and as the fingers holding the control stick stiffened, Riddhe detected 'that wave' which blew through the inside of the cockpit.

The red enemy suit suddenly changed its course and left the path of contact with the ReZEL. *Did that guy detect it too?* Riddhe immediately took avoid to dodge as he got goosebumps trying to find the source of the wave on the all-view monitor. The wave expanded through the vacuum like a heart pulsating in cadence. He felt this feeling during the battle the day before. This time, it came from the white mothership that was floating amongst the sea of debris.

Riddhe let his cursor point at the Nahel Argama that was firing and enlarged the image. On the middle of the ship that lost its portside catapult deck, the first catapult deck that formed the bow opened its hatch as a mobile suit was sent there. It had white armor like the ship, had a human-shaped build and a lone horn on its forehead—

"It's the Gundam…!?"

The dual eye sensor inside the visor flickered as if in response to Riddhe's inadvertent musing. The white mobile suit was wielding a beam rifle and a shield on its arms, giving off a devilish presence as it stood on the catapult deck of the Nahel Argama.

Part 11[edit]

"It's the first catapult. The Gundam…!

One line from the operator caused everyone on the bridge to look at the communication console. Audrey—Mineva Lao Zabi heard her heart pump as she stared at the side monitor too.

Multiple surveillance cameras installed inside and outside the catapult deck caught sight of the "Unicorn" as the images were shown on the multi-screen. The right hand was wielding a beam rifle loaded with a reloadable pack of 5 rapid-fire rounds, and the left hand was wielding a shield that was as white as the unit itself. The white unit looked like a carrier as it waited for the moment to launch. "SOMEONE TELL THE ONE PILOTING IT TO STOP!" Mineva ignored Captain Otto's roar as she stared at the "Unicorn" which had reloaded completely. *There's only one person who can use that machine. What does he plan to do—*

Daguza forgot that he had his gun pointed at Mineva as he got engrossed looking at the screen. "Gundam, may I know who the pilot is? The captain hasn't given the order to launch. Please return!" The communication operator repeated, but the "Unicorn" showed no signs of returning. *Did he cut the line, or does he not know how to use it?* Mineva deduced that it was most likely the latter as she looked for the man called Alberto on the bridge.

He, who seemed to be one from Anaheim Electronics, knew that the "Unicorn" was the key to the Laplace Box. If it were that man, he would know how to control the machine from the outside. Mineva looked around the bridge, and amongst the many people dressed in normal suits and working, there was not sight of Alberto himself. At her wits' end, Mineva looked back at the screen. The door to the corridor opened after that, and she saw Alberto floating in.

At this moment, Mineva realized something. Daguza, who seemed to realize the exact same thing as he launched himself at Alberto who intended to move towards the commander seat while pretending not to know anything. He merely pretended with a defensive stance before giving a shameless look at Daguza. Mineva saw this and believed that her instincts were right.

"You bastard…! Did you let the boy get on it?"

Daguza said while grabbing the other party's normal suit by the collar. Captain Otto and the rest were shocked as they looked back, and Mineva gave a probing look there. Alberto sneered as he answered unabashedly, "I merely answered everyone's request."

"I equipped him with everything. The RX-0's capabilities are guaranteed. Even an amateur pilot can buy us enough time to escape."

"This is basically handing the Box over to Neo Zeon, and you dared to say that it was merely a key to the Box itself."

Alberto suppressed Daguza's rare emotional voice as he continued, "If the key is spoilt, the Box won't be opened, and the Federation's interests are protected. I don't suppose you have any disagreements, do you?"

The anxiety depressed his blood as his heart pumped loudly again. "You bastard…you already calculated the outcome…" Daguza pushed aside Alberto, turned his back on him and mused, while Mineva stared at the side monitor that showed the "Unicorn".

"There's no need to worry. Young Banagher will fight well. Until the RX-0 is wrecked, that is."

Alberto said as he floated due to inertia and his back hit the wall. He—Banagher, who did not respond to the operator's call, was waiting to launch inside the "Unicorn"s cockpit, and did not know that this plan was underway. He did not know that he was sent onto the "Unicorn" to be destroyed with the secret of the "box". Perhaps that was the karma that came with all who inherited the blood of the Vist family? Maybe so. However, he did not do this because he was being bound by shackles or duty. Banagher was simply being driven by a powerful impulse, passion as he sat in the "Unicorn"s cockpit.

He would be leaving just like this. The owner of the skin that touched her hand was going on a path of no return. Mineva realized this as she reached her hand out of the console, seemingly trying to shake aside the operator as she was driven by swelling emotions she had not imagined. Everything she had abided by up till this point collapsed, and Mineva realized that she would expose her own fear as she yelled.

"BANAGHER, STOP…!"

Part 12[edit]

The pilot suit that was developed for the "Unicorn"s use was not inferior in any ways to an ordinary pilot suit. It could be said to be a

more customized version. Unlike normal suits, it had 5 layers of mixed fabrics containing fiberglass and flexible plastics, successfully forming a streamlined body-shape. Also, there was a protective armored vest on the inside that was equipped with an installation to withstand G-forces and life support systems. There were many tubes inside this armor connecting the elbows and arms to the Anti-G force installation, but would not affect the appearance of the suit itself as the tubes were all parsed inside. The suit itself was white to match the “Unicorn”s color, and the red lines of it made it look smart. The chest had a Unicorn on it, the logo representing the Vist Foundation, and the simple design gave it a tone that was not too cumbersome.

(That pilot suit itself has a system that can reduce the stress from the G-force through drugs. Logically, it will be activated when the NT-D is activated. It is injected through painless osmotic pressure, there will be some psyche when it is activated.)

Alberto’s subordinate—who called himself a secretary, but was obviously trained in such matters—remained at the takeoff-and-landing command zone as he spoke through the wireless communicator. Banagher felt a chill when he heard the terms drugs and injections and the like, and asked, “The NT-D?”

(That will refer to the state when the RX-0 removes its limiters. It can’t be activated randomly, but you once activated it, so it’s fine.)

The man’s voice sounded like it was consoling Banagher. Under Alberto’s arrangements, Banagher put on the pilot suit and sat inside the cockpit of the “Unicorn”. He thought of how he was being nudged in the back by such voices. *Basically, I’m being used as a nice meat shield, but fine. It’s good if I can force that red mobile suit to retreat and retreat when I find the opportunity.* Banagher’s rationality over whether he could be able to do such a thing was reduced halfway as he saw the numerous explosions appearing on the all-view monitor. The thin layer of space was replicated using CG like a game image—

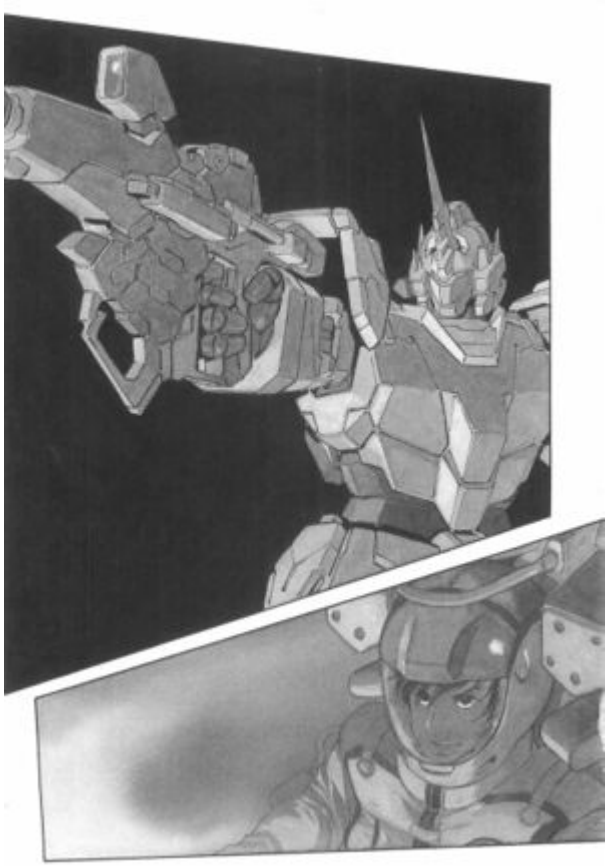
Suddenly, a point in the middle of space gathered sharply, causing Banagher to feel goosebumps on his back. *I can’t stay here. I’ll be targeted.* Banagher finished the safety checks done for the mini-mobile suit and held onto the control seats on the sides of the linear seat, declaring to the wireless communicator: “Launching checks, done.” There was no answer, and the catapult showed no signs of initiating a countdown as the operator’s voice that was trying to stop him rang from the bridge public channel. The Captain and the rest may had realized what was going on as the catapult control was switched to the bridge.

Something gathering in the middle of space gathered its intensity. Banagher stared at the catapult that showed no movements through the monitor, and turned his eyes to the front, exerting all his trength into his abdomen. “Forced release!” He called out, removed the linkage with the catapult, and stepped on the pedal.

The hooks on the heels were released, and the machine of the “Unicorn” gently left the deck. The beam that flew over destroyed the catapult, and the light and shockwave exploded right below the feet. Banagher left the Nahel Argama far below him, and then turned his stare at where the beam came from as the beam rifle in his right hand started aiming.

Banagher switched on the aiming screen, which automatically caught sight of the red mobile suit flying amidst the debris. “I see it!” He felt his head burning as he hooked the finger on the trigger in a dream-like state.

“GO!”



The mechanical hand of the “Unicorn” wielding the linked joystick squeezed the trigger of the beam rifle. At that moment, the light-filter could not hold in the large expansion of light as the large energy rocked the frame of the “Unicorn”. The empty chamber slid out of the E-pack, and a new pack was reloaded.

The beam that was a lot thicker than the enemy shots raced through the debris, hitting the 30m thick rock. The rock immediately exploded with the heat, forming countless rays of light in the middle of vacuum. The vortex of light let out a shockwave, and the enemy unit behind the rock got caught in this. The pilot of the enemy suit “Sinanju” seemed to hesitate due to the unexpected power as he hurriedly regrouped. The explosion shone on the red armor as the unit evaded.

“Amazing…!”

The “Unicorn” used up 4 shots worth of energy at one go, and the power was enough to be considered a beam magnum. Banagher was stunned by this overwhelming power. *Am I able to do this?* This thought only appeared in his mind at this moment, causing him to swallow his saliva.

Part 13[edit]

If a normal beam was a ‘trail’, that thing would be called a ‘fireball’. If it were the main cannon of an enemy warship…the position itself would not be right. One would think that a new mobile suit was launched and shot it.

“What is that…!?”

A chill rose up his body. The battlefield that was dyed by Full Frontal was being invaded by something else. Angelo inadvertently put on his helmet, and that abnormal’ fireball went by 5km, causing a chill in him. It was not just a beam launcher. The mega-particle cannon that would match a ship’s main cannon flashed in the middle of the vacuum. The second and 3rd fireball that were shot missed quite a bit, but the overwhelming power of caused the debris that acted as shields to explode, and the “Sinanju” looked like it was trying its best just to dodge.

“Is it a mega-bazooka launcher? But this speed…”

The mega-bazooka launcher, the weapon described as having the most firepower amongst mobile suit weapons, would require lots of time to charge the beam launcher, and had the fatal flaw of being unable to be shot consecutively. *This weapon however has equal destructive power, the speed of a beam rifle, and it also has the range*

that won't lose to a launcher. What is it? Angelo muttered as he grabbed onto the ball-shaped joystick, and saw the large energy move past him was close range.

That energy that was a mere stray bullet grazed past Ensign Sergi's "Geara Zulu". If it were a beam rifle shot, this would only cause a light burn at such a distance, but the high-energy particle cannon that came over like a fireball melted the machine's armor, and in mere seconds, Sergi was collapsed within a pile of scrap. The shockwave that grazed past continued, and the machine got bent in half at the waist, snapping into halves and floating in space for a short while.

There was no time to even call out through the communicator. "What…!?" Sergi's machine that was divided in half exploded right in front of the speechless Angelo. Suddenly, static could be heard from the wireless communicator, and the shockwave that spread through space caused the pilot to let out a deep sound.

"A LITTLE GRAZE DESTROYED IT!? THAT WAS…!!"

Angelo turned away from the expanding explosion and looked at the battlefield. An umpteenth flash that shook the vacuum hit the debris that would be viewed as the debris of a colony. The "Sinanju" braked suddenly as the exploding debris got in its way, only for the enemy mobile suit to get behind it. Angelo could only see a rough CG visual, but that white machine would definitely be the Gundam—the mobile suit that even Marida Cruz was forced to retreat from, the one that inherited the name of the devil from the Federation. Angelo pushed the trigger of the beam launcher to the maximum before that overly powerful beam was shot over.

The beam that was shot out from the muzzle lit the purple armor, flying right at the white mobile suit. This was not something that was done after consideration. The Gundam hurriedly flew away to dodge, and the "Sinanju" managed to regroup, intending to go underneath to attack. Lieutenant Cuarón seemed to have started shooting covering fire, but Angelo did not actually see for real. *I squeezed the trigger, I stained Captain Frontal's battlefield.* Angelo felt black remorse and rage enter his blank white mind, and felt the fingertips that were clenched trembling.

Trust and loyalty. The clear banner that he bore for himself was stained by this decisive attack. No matter how much he tried to wash it, he would not be able to buy a new one to replace it. Angelo, understood that he had already lost a world in the sense that it could not be back to before.

The exalted utopia where he did not and would not have to pull the trigger did not exist anymore. *That white mobile suit destroyed this world—and stained me like filth that robbed my world before.*

“You forced me…to shoot!?”

Angelo squeezed the trigger while losing himself, sniping at the white mobile suit that was dodging. *If I’m stained, there’s no need to hold back. I must shoot it down—no matter the means.* The enemy suit continued to zig-zag its way to escape, and Angelo squeezed the trigger mechanically. *You better be stained by these hands!*

Part 14[edit]

The mega-particle shots flew over at sub-light speed, but they would not be able to hit an object moving at several kilometers every second easily. The scary thing was that when the machine flew at the same level as the enemy—the unexpected snipe would either come from the front or the back.

Thus, he had to zig-zag around. If he moved in the same direction for more than 5 seconds, it would be the same as stopping. This was an actual state in space battles. The snipers knew that when they had allies, one machine would pursue the enemy to try and lure him into the range of the other unit. At this point, Banagher was facing such a situation. He had been focusing on the red enemy unit’s movements and chasing after it, and nearly lost his legs to the beams that came flying in from afar.

“2 vs 1…no, 3 vs 1, huh?”

Banagher mused as he felt a chill from the beam that grazed his head. There were the red enemy suit and the 2 enemy suits supporting from afar, and once he got baited by the red guy, the intersecting beams that crossed the 3 dimensional plane would fly over. He could not let himself get hit.

“Calm down, Banagher. You may not remember, but you should have received training in this. that man trained you…”

Banagher’s temples pulsed. His head that had a band tied on it gathered its concentration on the target. The machine continued to move around, and Banagher pulled out the spare magazine that was mounted on the “Unicorn”s waist to reload it into the empty beam rifle. 1 magazine had 5 shots, and including the spare shots, he had another 10 rounds—Banagher vaguely remembered that there were no limit in the ammo count during training.

I can't waste bullets like this. Banagher continued to pursue the thruster jets flares of the red enemy suit through the all-view monitor. The killing intent continued to pressure from all directions, coldly stimulating the skin that was drenched in sweat. *A beam may fly from somewhere now and burn the cockpit. Don't miss sight of them. Got to hang on. Don't get forced back, be the one pressuring.*

One hit, two hits. The "Unicorn"s beam rifle let out shots, and the hot magnum rounds were ejected from the cartridge. The thick and large beams merely shone for a while as small debris were evaporated on the path, creating rings of light. This scene of a massacre made the light filter pretty useless as Banagher had his face staring right at the monitor dyed in white. The red enemy suit quickly turned around, and the alarm indicating a lost signal rang through the cockpit.

Neither the object sensor nor the heat sensor showed any response. Banagher felt sweltering sweat as he turned his eyes around. He could receive the radar signal from the Nahel Argama and the remaining machine on their side, but he could not find the enemy's response. Countless debris floated around, and the object sensor was showing a complete blank. *Are the heat sources mixed in the enemy or the exploded hot metal bits—*

"Damn it, I can't touch him like this…!"

The red enemy unit had not fired a single round as it continued to merely lure Banagher into its allies' range. Both sides had not stepped on the same battleground as Banagher anxiously shot the 3rd round, turn the machine around, and saw a savage light explode at the back.

The entire body of the "Unicorn" was lit by the mega-particle that grazed by, and the horizontal G-force tugged at the unit through the impact. The beam grazed by, and the remaining particles that hit the armor let out knocking sounds that were like small stones hitting it. Banagher felt intense pressure from the legs. The airbag that was installed on the pilot seat expanded, preventing the pilot's blood from rushing to the legs. At that moment, the enemy could be spotted amongst the just dimmed view, and Banagher frantically held onto the control stick that was nearly let go.

The next direct hit will come. Banagher instinctively realized as he stepped on the pedal, moving the machine around as he fired the beam magnum. The large light ripped through vacuum, and the red enemy that had been evading agilely appeared amongst the debris.

"That was close…!"

The skin let out a clattering sound as goosebumps rose. Banagher unwittingly squeezed the trigger, and he felt the last magnum shot fly out. The red enemy dodged the beam attack and closed in on the "Unicorn" without slowing down. *He's coming right at me.* As Banagher thought about this, another person's breathing could be heard from the communicator. (As long as I don't get hit…) The sharp voice said this as it rang in Banagher's ears.

(This will be nothing!)

The monoeye of the red enemy shone, and the blade of the beam saber swept up from the feet. Banagher screamed out as he pulled the control stick. He was originally unable to make it, but the "Unicorn" was faster by a beat or so, causing the thrusters on the back and legs to flare up and leave the danger area directly. The red machine's beam saber swung through the space at the last moment, leaving behind a trail of yellow light.

The Intention Automatic System could allow the "Unicorn"s psycommu installation to pick up the pilot's thought waves, allowing the machine's skeleton—the full psycommu body to be able to react at the same time and operate. Banagher remembered the explanation Alberto gave when he was hurrying down, "There's no need to control it. Is this it…?" Banagher muttered to himself, and widened his eyes at the evil intent that surged up his spine. *I'm being shot at. I got too careless of that red guy.* Banagher saw that he was moving in a straight line for several seconds undefended, and unwittedly raised the shield in his left hand to the front. The mega-particle bullet then covered the all-view monitor.

He was already ready for a hit, but the beam was deflected right in front of the shield, and a wind-pressure like impact shook the machine before stopping. Yes, the beam bent. The original beam trajectory would have hit the machine directly, but it was like an invisible pressure bent the path of the shot.

(An I-field…!?) The enemy's voice could be heard from the wireless communicator. Banagher looked side to side without knowing what was going on. The shield that was equipped on the left hand changed, and the completely different silhouette on the monitor attracted Banagher's attention. The many layers of heavy armor expanded above and below, and the radial armor had slid aside to show what resembled a flower instead of a shield.

With the round installation that was hidden at the center, the radial-shaped sliding armor opened like blooming petals, forming an invisible field around it. The I-field kept Minovsky Particles compressed and

cause the mega-particles to deflect off. This field that was used to control a core reactor deflected the beam trajectory. The shield itself had a device that would create small I-fields and protect it against beam weapons.

The red enemy showed a doubtful action. Banagher checked the machine to see if it took any damage, mused “Is this thing really okay?” and heaved out the breath he held. He reloaded the last magazine before the sweat on his body could even drip down, and aim the reticule at the red unit.

“In that case…!”

Banagher pointed the shield right at the front and fired the beam magnum. He went right at the exploding debris and intended to get right below the enemy unit as he fired two shots. *If I can defend against a beam flying from afar, there’s no need to worry about moving around wildly. I can definitely hit him if I can calm down and shoot.* The third flare lit the red enemy armor. *Once more-this call echoed within Banagher’s agitated mind, and the 4th shot was released when the red enemy stopped.*

The exploded ball of light expanded, and the debris appeared on the monitor in black trails. *Did I get him?* Banagher bent forward, only to feel a chill to a chill from the siren that rang inside the cockpit. It was the approaching siren—coming from below. It was too late by the time he realized it, and the red mobile suit’s monoeye suddenly appeared on the monitor as the leg kicked the abdomen of the “Unicorn”.

The tough 20 ton block of metal caused the machine to experience a destructive amount of recoil due to the mass and the velocity of the impact. The “Unicorn” was sent flying back as the powerful G-force rocked Banagher from behind. The attachments at the back let out a clattering sound, and the air barrier that shot out of the display board formed an invisible cushion. The helmet that hit the board did not crack apart because this layer of air barrier lessened the impact, but was unable to nullify this bone-crushing impact completely. *I definitely thought that I got rid of the enemy, so why? Did he predict my fire and let a missile he has explode?* His mind that was experiencing the pull of the powerful G force was having these thoughts that faded. *I can’t match this enemy. This conclusion and fear appeared at the same time.* The capability of the mobile suit isn’t even half the factor determining the win. The pilot’s abilities are based on experience, talent, and—

Suddenly, a shocking impact could be felt from behind, dispersing all doubt. This G-force struck from the front, and Banagher was pushed

back onto the linear seat, only to feel an icy cold liquid flow out of his nose. The “Unicorn” that was sent flying slammed hard into a stone tablet 50m in diameter.

This is definitely not a coincidence. The enemy definitely predicted the flow of the debris and planned to let me hit this stone block, and it’s obvious from how it continued to close in on me. Banagher caught sight of the monoeye amidst his blurry vision, and subconsciously raised his rifle. He saw the last magnum round let out a torrent of bullets, and blankly squeezed the trigger while the enemy unit with considerable mobility continued dodging as the alarm rang. Everything and anything seemed to be covered by a translucent field as the sense of realism gradually faded. Banagher thought, *Will I die like this?* as the bones and flesh clattered.

I couldn’t do anything at all. The Nahel Argama hasn’t left the radar range, I haven’t damaged the red enemy by the slightest. I couldn’t save Audrey, I can’t repay the expectations dad gave me when he handed me this machine —the enemy mobile suit in front let out a gust of killing intent, and as the hair rose from the scalp, Banagher realized that it was the ‘heat’ burning within his body.

This ‘heat’ started when he ignored the silent adults and boarded the “Unicorn”…no, it existed even before that, when he met Audrey for the first time, this ‘heat’ that was born when he was walking with her still pulsed within this body. Banagher knew that this ‘heat’ was letting blood flow through his fearful body and soul, gushing out from his pores. *That’s not all. There’s definitely something else I can do.* This ‘heat’ continued to say this to him as a small glow exploded through his forehead.

Banagher visualized this burning sensation piercing through the psycommu that formed the frame and gathered on the “Unicorn”s lone horn. The horn split in halves like lightning-chopped wood, forming a V shape, and the units on both sides of the head turned half a round. The beam sabers handles that were on the back poked out, and the dual eye sensors hidden under the face mask flashed like a human blink, and the gaps that were formed by the armor bits that slid off gave a red glow.

The wrists and the feet felt a heavy impact as the monitor of the circular device installed at the arms of the pilot seat was activated. The display board showed the words ‘NT-D’, and the condition monitor changed gradually while the full psycommu that was like an exoskeleton expanded as several parts of the armor slid aside. It was the “Unicorn” that was larger than before—the white mobile suit that

did not fit its name at this point. The ‘transformation’ that happened in milliseconds happened, and the exposed thrusters that were on the back and legs became really hot as the machine automatic activated its mobility to leave the debris field. The red enemy’s beam saber stabbed into the surface of the rock, causing the dust to explode out.

This instantaneous explosiveness, acceleration and maneuverability were different from the controls before. The red enemy immediately turned around and quickly left the scene. The “Unicorn” did not let go of the enemy’s movements as it burned its thrusters and immediately got behind the enemy. Banagher was shaken by the fatal G-force, and despite fulling that his body was being crushed by some heavy fluid, he continued to follow the enemy that zigzagged its way out. The enemy he could nota approach before could be seen easily at this point. Banagher’s consciousness was on the same wavelength as the machine as he knew that his consciousness was all over it.

“This is the Gundam…!?”

His hear pounded wildly like a morning bell, and the body that was forced down the linear seat felt very hot. The attachments on the headrest forced the helmet down, and he could not turn his head around. However, it was not inconvenient to control it as the V-shaped multiblade antenna of the “Unicorn Gundam” let out a golden glow reflecting how Banagher was consciously turning his head to think and predict as it caught sight of the enemy unit right in front of it. The thruster jets of the red enemy flared in intervals as it got between the debris. It was fast—but the trajectories were predictable.

“I can see it…!”

Banagher brushed aside the air that felt somewhat sticky as he held onto the joystick. The beating in his heart was faster, and his body heated up like it was about to explode. *Too slow.* Banagher was aware for this, but the “Unicorn Gundam” that predicted this a second earlier let out a burst of Vulcan cannons from the fixed armament without the pilot’s input. The tracer shots that took up 1 out of 5 shots let out trails of light, and the visible-laser like fire charged right at the enemy.

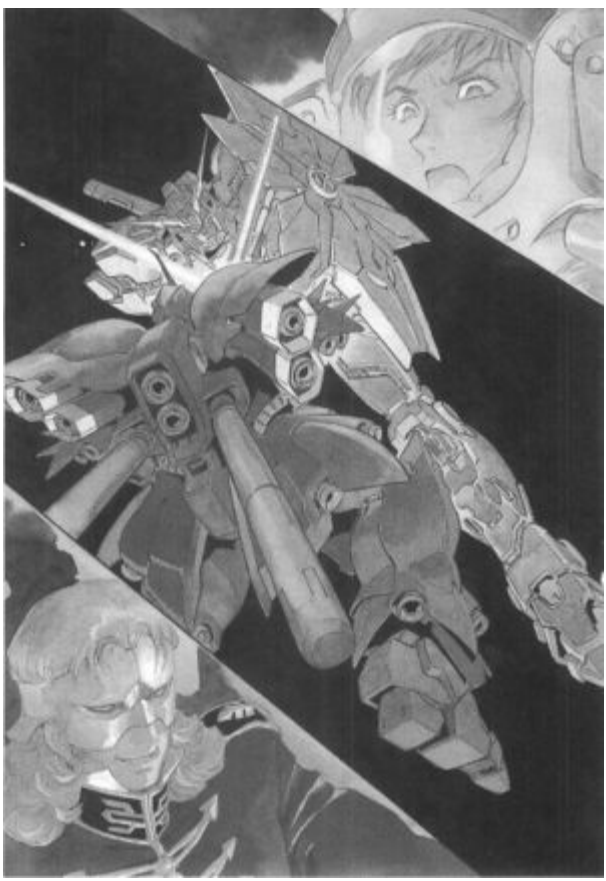
The red enemy turned its body to evade. Once it predicted the where the thruster jets would be from the enemy’s posture, the Gundam fired out a flare that reached that place first. The shockwave of the shot rocked the cockpit (Oh…?) Banagher heard this sigh through the wireless communicator, and felt a chill from the enemy’s voice that had fear and delight, feeling that this was the time he would get serious. The enemy suit that suddenly flipped kicked the debris nearby.

The enemy unit flew right at Banagher by using the recoil from the kick to spin its body. *He's below me.* As Banagher thought this way, the upswinging beam saber appeared in his sights. While the body was unable to move, the acutely aware consciousness deep within took action on its own. The Gundam reacted earlier and drew a beam saber. The beam particles from both sides clashed, and a glow brighter than an explosion expanded through the sea of debris.

(You're going to be my enemy again, Gundam…!?)

Die he open the communication channel? The enemy's voice rang clearly in Banagher's ears. He had no time to think as he shouted, "Please retreat!"

"If you don't retreat, Audrey will…!"



The beam sabers that were clashed with each other bounced off, and the two units pulled their distance while the remaining particles were scattered like fireworks. Banagher immediately regrouped as he saw the red enemy unit on the monitor before aiming at it, only to be

shocked by another voice (I'll flank him. Rise up quickly!)

Banagher immediately went up, and a beam that felt in from a corner grazed past the enemy unit. The enemy unit managed to dodge the attack at the last minute, only to be stumbled by the huge particle beams that were shot over, leaving the machine undefended right in front of Banagher. *A good chance!* His thoughts shouted as he let the Vulcan cannons fire over, letting two trails of fire fly right at the enemy unit.

The ally transformable mobile suit continued to fire the beam rifle docked on the shield at the bottom of the machine as it closed in. The silhouette that was in fighter jet form went below Banagher, immediately transformed into a mobile suit, and the unit that lost a leg got right below the enemy. He might look rather anxious at this point, but that mobility was something to behold. "That's Ensign Riddhe, right?" Banagher muttered for a short moment as he changed the direction the "Unicorn" was heading based on the ally machine's movements. Both machines fire intersected each other, forming a large and long beam cross in the vacuum.

Their consciousnesses were connected with each other as Banagher felt that he was forcing back the red enemy unit. The red enemy fell back, and the intersection point of the beam was moving onto the unit, looking like it was sucking in the unit. The debris that got involved in the beam exploded, and as the enemy unit intended to dodge the flying debris, Banagher saw the red armor take a direct hit with a glow as it exploded.

"Did I get him?"

This time, he did not make a mistake. The enemy unit took a hit on the hell, and looked like it was turning around. The thruster jet that stopped glowed, and the machine tried to escape while abandoning the thruster unit on the back/ Banagher was numbed by the excited heart and controlled by the burning sensation of blood rushing up his brain as he chased after the enemy unit showing its back.

The "Unicorn" charged forward recklessly while dragging a trail of red luminous light. It used its shields to block the enemies' long-ranged attacks, got past the relatively large debris, and could see the silhouette of the red enemy. (Don't go too far in!) Ensign Riddhe's voice rang from the wireless communicator, but it did not matter. Banagher let the left mechanical hand wield the trembling beam saber, and stepped on the pedal as much as possible.

The hand movements were synchronized with the psycommu, and the

Gundam immediately accelerated as it charged right at the red enemy. The airbag equipped inside the cockpit expanded, surrounding the entire body tightly like it was about to explode. *My heart's going to break, I can't breathe.* The circular device at the wrist flickered, and the warning sign appeared on the display board. The enemy unit was right in front of it. Everything was dyed red, and the vision that was narrowed quickly was dyed in the color of blood. Banagher did not bother with thinking about why this would be the case as he moved the aiming reticule of the beam saber over the sight of the enemy unit he capture. The red enemy suddenly turned around with its monoeye staring at Banagher, and at this moment—

(How naïve.)

The enemy's voice rang from the wireless communicator, cooling the nerves that were excited. Numerous beams then came flying in from a completely different direction, and the exploding sparks appeared between the Gundam and the enemy.

These were not beams that were support fire from afar, but attacks that came from an extremely close range. Banagher instinctively raised his shield to let the machine retreat, and Riddhe called out (Behind you!), causing his numb fingertips to tremble.

The "Unicorn"s psycommu read that Banagher intended to look back as its head unit quickly turned around. The weirdly-shaped mobile expanded its 4 pods like wings as it appeared right in front of him. Banagher felt his mind turn blank.

The 4-winged that attacked "Industrial 7"—where did it come from? The consciousness that was attracted by the red enemy suit returned back to its body, and it was too late by the time he grabbed onto the joystick. The large unit with 4 wings covered the all-view monitor as its support arms that were like insects grabbed the "Unicorn"s body.

The left arm, right shoulder and head were pinched, and the impact reached the cockpit that had the warning lights flickering. One of the pods was still damaged, and the hidden arm was melted off with the front part. He saw that it was that 4-winged machine, which then clenched its right mechanical hand as a fist and slammed it into the Gundam's abdomen.

This punch splendidly hit the body as if it was swung by a person himself. The impact that was several tons heavy erupted through a layer of armor. The monitor suddenly flickered abruptly, but the Unicorn could not be blown behind since it was grabbed by the 3

hidden arms. The impact that could not be reduced rocked the machine, and the force of the hit charged right at the cockpit, causing the weakest point of the unit—Banagher's body to short-circuit.

The loud sound of metal clashing with each other rang, and the abruptly expanding air struck Banagher. The linear seat let out a creaking sound together with its support, the heart that felt like it pounded suddenly gradually calmed down as the white sparks appeared right in front of him. The vomit that came out from the mouth dirtied the visor, and all Banagher could see was the monoeye of the 4-winged becoming rather blurry as his vision gradually faded.

The body that was extremely tense collapsed together with the mind, and the machine's nerves were the only thing supporting the frame of the Gundam. The 'heat' was swallowed by the icy cold darkness. *I'm sorry, Audrey.* As the giant gradually transformed into the "Unicorn", Banagher's battered body let out this musing in the middle of the giant's abdomen, and the final part of this 'heat' seeped out in the form of water from the eyes. He could not even look at the red enemy right above him as he lost consciousness.

Part 15[edit]

The luminous light that could be seen from afar faded, and the machine used its 3 support arms under its wings to capture on the Gundam as it stepped on the pedal. The Gundam gradually changed back into the mobile suit with the lone horn. Riddhe saw 4 thruster jets start to flare on the monitor, and stepped on the pedal without even thinking.

"Wait…!"

The beam launcher has finished charging, but I can't snipe at it as long as the 4-winged's still carrying the Gundam. I can only go close and use the beam rifle equipped under the shield to slow the enemy down, but with the 4-winged allow us to do? As Riddhe thought about this, countless beams appeared in multiple directions right in front of him, forcing him retreat immediately. They were not beams of support fire from afar, but thinner beams.

Despite these being attacks from close distance, the funnels did not trigger the sensors.

"The funnels…?"

The beams that closed in from all directions appeared on the all-view monitor, and the complex lights lit the cockpit piloting the trembling machine. Riddhe got through the surrounding funnels that were sent

out by the 4-winged, and bit his lips as he could not do anything.

Everything was planned right from the beginning. That red guy—the "Sinanju" acted as bait, while the lured Gundam used its 4 wingeds to clamp it. That 4-winged hid inside the debris and entered the battlefield while our side was attracted by the opening left by the "Sinanju". They definitely planned using this red guy to show us that he got hit.

Is this planned based on the unknown factor over whether the Gundam would launch? I guess so. Those Zeon guys definitely expected that the Gundam would be launched. It's impossible for the Nahel Argama to defend against such an attack with their current fighting strength alone. The previous battle already showed the enemy fully our powerless our side is.

"Damn it…!"

They actually looked down on us like that! Riddhe charged out from the surrounding funnels, and forced his machine to transform. Despite losing a leg, the Waverider form itself would allow them to catch up to the enemy unit. *We can't hand the Gundam, the mobile suit that looks like it had something to do with the Laplace Box, over to those guys.* This thought appeared in his mind, and he did not think after that. He kept waiting for the machine's status to change, but it just would not change no matter how much he waited. What replaced it was an alarm indicating that the machine functions were down. The multiple windows covered the all-view monitor, showing the damaged parts as the warning lights shone through the cockpit.

He could not activate the standby circuits, and the damage control system could not recover. Riddhe tried all means, recognized that his machine had already becomd scrap metal, and groaned, "Damn it!" as he slammed the display board. He saw the light dot of the Gundam being held by the enemy leave the sensor range. The pilot that was inside it was too—

"It's that brat…why did he…"

Riddhe muttered as he clenched the fists lying on the display board. He knew the answer clearly. *That voice came through the wireless communicator…calling for Audrey. That boy, Banagher the civilian, boarded that Gundam to save her. He was the only one who took action as the adults got more than what they bargained by grabbing a hostage and shot themselves in the foot. He did not care whether she was Mineva Zabi or not.*

And then, I got saved again. I'm the only one who survived in this

space where so many of my comrades died. Live even if I have to bite on stone…what should I do when you say this? How do I pay you back for your deaths? Riddhe looked around the floating debris and asked this at Norm's machine that showed no signs of life, standing around without finding any answers. The enemy units were no longer in the sensor range, and Riddhe felt the space with the disappeared explosions cool down silently.

Part 16[edit]

The unit probably malfunctioned there. That transformable unit with its lost leg has given up on pursuing. There's no need to shoot it down. Marida turned back and deduced this as she ordered the scattered funnels to return. She closed her eyes, imagined the return paths of the funnels, and turned her stare right at the white mobile suit grabbed by the extra arms.

The mobile suit lost its Gundam appearance as an antenna that looked like a lone horn appeared on it. *Looking at these straightforward attack patterns that showed no signs of retreating, it seems that it's the same pilot as the one that pilot this mobile suit the last time. IT's expected that the cornered enemy ship would send out the Gundam, but what's the point of sending the same pilot who's no different from an amateur? Even if this is a very important machine related to the Laplace Box—*

A slight shock shook the cockpit, and Marida stopped what she was thinking. The "Sinanju" flying beside her touched the "Kshatriya"s fingertips with the left hand. (I probably would not get this chance if I didn't show that I got hit…this would be what I want to say, but that's not all.) The calm voice that rang through the wireless communicator echoed in Marida's ears.

(I probably would have been shot down if you weren't around. Thank you, Lieutenant Marida Cruz.)

Full Frontal's voice showed some signs of self-depreciation, but despite that, it was rather sincere. As far as Marida knew, his "Sinanju" had never taken a direct hit before. She stared at the red machine that was charred by the burn on the calf in a concerned manner and deduced that it was not too much of an issue. "I was just following your plan, Captain." Marida answered without any expression. "More concerning though…" she wanted to continue (I understand) the other party's voice reached her helmet before she could continue.

(It's unexpected for Her Highness Mineva to be captured by the enemy ship. I want to save her as fast as possible, but we have to prioritize

this unit first.)

“As far as we know, the enemy doesn’t have enough forces we know of. If you permit, I can go back to retrieve her on my own.”

(It can’t be helped. If the Box is taken away, the enemy fleet nearby may show signs of mobilizing. It’s not fun to be surrounded by the enemy before we return back to “Palau”.)

“But…!”

(There are many chances to save Her Highness, including political means. We shouldn’t force ourselves here and lose you and the “Kshatriya” together, Lieutenant. You have to be patient.)

Frontal saying these words seemed like he was telling himself to endure. *Tactically, he’s right to say that we had to leave ‘her’ alone. But is this merely all an act? Basically, we have been assuming that all the actions this masked man of unknown origin did are all an act.* “… Yes.” Marida answered as she turned her eyes to look at the monoeye of the “Sinanju”. Then, other voices could be heard within the wireless communicator (Captain, good thing you’re fine!) as a “Geara Zulu” followed them.

The purple machine that was blazing off its boost port turned itself as it followed the “Sinanju”. The “Kshatriya” took the blast from Angelo's thruster pressure, causing Marida to click her tongue. Angelo would always do this whenever he had a chance, and it looked like he did not care about Marida’s existence. She saw the leader of the escort squad circle the “Sinanju” as it first showed its loyalty by checking if the machine was safe. (Is that so? What happened to Ensign Sergi was really unfortunate.) Frontal said with a rising tone.

(I’m sorry. I was right beside him…) Cuarón let out this voice that sounded like he was gritting his teeth as he sharply turned the monoeye over to the Gundam. (So this is that Gundam…) Marida felt goosebumps as she heard that deep voice.

(It’s just as the predictions we had from Lieutenant Marida’s report. It does look like a rather radical unit. It’ll be great if the pilot isn’t crushed.)

Frontal said. *This abnormal function that views a pilot’s life as secondary can’t possibly be maintained for a long time. It’s correct to guess that there’s a time limit, and we managed to capture it successfully, but we can’t guarantee if the pilot could survive until we open the cockpit.* Marida felt annoyed by the heinous stare from Cuarón’s unit as she looked for some place to stare into at the wide

space behind her.

The enemy ship's covered with debris; I can't grasp the correct position, and I can't feel any pressure…in that case, is this pilot the one letting out the 'presence' before? Marida thought about this, felt that it was just an 'artificial being', stopped thinking, and looked back at where the Garencieres was.

No matter what, Her Highness Mineva is on that ship. I have to get back this symbol of Zeon's revival Zinnerman has been risking his life on protecting no matter what—

Part 17[edit]

"We lost response. Target left the radar's range."

The sensor operator's report rang painfully. "Understood." Otto answered with an obviously heavy-hearted tone, while Mineva clenched the hands that were on the back rest of the navigation seat.

The machines it was carried were completely wrecked. The ship itself too heavy damage, and the "Unicorn" landed in the hands of the enemy. The current situation was such that there was nothing other than defeat, but the atmosphere that filled the "Nahel Argama" was not of regret over the loss of the battle, but regret and anger over being unable to do anything. *Did we not lose by fighting? Didn't we end up being unable to do anything?* Such a feeling struck everyone's shoulders. Such a self-awareness caused the mouths to become heavy, creating an atmosphere that surrounded the ship, one where everyone did not dare to look at each other straight in the eyes.

That's right, nobody managed to do anything. Including themselves, everyone present did not manage to do anything. They did fight—to survive, to carry out their responsibilities. However, they never got anything. From the beginning till the end, they were all restrained by their positions, started bluffing, playing pointless tricks, and yet never did anything that was really necessary. In the end, everyone lost something important.

"THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO SAY UNDERSTOOD! CAPTAIN, START SEARCHING FOR THE ENEMY!. THE "UNICORN", THE BOX WAS TAKEN BY NEO ZEON…!"

As everyone remained silent, Alberto was the only one pointing at the space outside the window. He took action through his own way before, and lost the most important thing to him. Before Mineva could even turn around, "It's impossible for us when we don't even have a mobile suit, right?" Otto's deep voice rang throughout the bridge.

“Thanks to you meddling around with your unnecessary stuff, the “Gundam” ended up being taken by the enemy. Shut up.”

“What are you saying!? If I didn’t do so, this ship might have been sunk by the Red Comet. This is the same as Commander Daguza using a hostage. Didn’t you silently agree as well, Captain!?”

The hulking assistant leader was standing beside Daguza, who was giving a stone-like face, and gave a disgruntled look at Alberto. Otto continued to look in front, and even though he was just holding onto the handle of the Captain’s seat, the rage that could not be vented elsewhere was different from Daguza’s. Alberto got close to him and continued to say in a commanding tone, “If that’s the case, we have to hurry up and ask for instructions from the Senate Council.”

“Hurry up and get into an area where the laser communicator can be —”

“I told you to shut up.”

As he said this, Otto reached his hand for Alberto’s helmet. He grabbed the visor and pulled it to him, bringing his face to a distance where their helmets were nearly sticking to each other and said, “Try saying another word if you dare.” The emphasized voice that had killing intent in it caused Alberto’s pulled body to tremble.

“I’ll throw you into space. Together with your subordinates.”

After intimidating him with a serious voice, Otto pushed him away. Alberto’s body continued to float in zero gravity until First Officer Liam, who was standing behind, grabbed him. Liam gently carried Alberto up until he was able to let his feet touch the floor. Just when he was about to grumble, he was stunned by the woman who was a head taller than him glaring down at him. He timidly looked around the bridge. All of them were responding as such. Alberto, whose soles were magnetized to the floor, started to stagger.

“Looks like your expectations failed you.”

Daguza muttered. Alberto could only clench his fists hard and tremble slightly as he did not say anything. Daguza passed by Mineva who was nearby and stood behind her with the usual poker face that had its emotions restrained.

“Pardon my rudeness to you.”

He silently spoke up and reached for Mineva’s shoulders. However, Mineva turned away before his fingers touched her cape.

The hand that reached out missed, but Daguza did not leave the place. Mineva kicked the floor and let her body float towards the exit of the bridge. The hulking assistant leader followed her from behind, and though Mineva felt that he had the intention of taking over Daguza's duties in escorting her, she had no intention of looking at anyone. Right now, she did not want to see anyone's face, and neither did she want anyone to touch her. Even though the communicator's voices continue to enter, Mineva still felt that the bridge was completely silent. Before she left, she again looked at the universe that was expanded outside the window.

There was a sea of stars filled with silent lights in front of the people who lost their expressions. *Just like that, Full Frontal obtained the key to the 'Box'. In terms of how every person here wasted their efforts, I myself lost a lot too, but is that all?* A large hole was opened in her chest, and Mineva muttered to herself in her heart as she experienced the feeling of loss that felt like her body was going to curl up if she did not tense up. The certain person she did not know how he looked like until yesterday, the one who called her Audrey, the puppy-like straightforward expression of his appeared in her mind as the feeling of the hand that held her hand tightly awoke again. It was not out of duty nor loyalty, but the warm hand of that person who reached out to her…

Banagher. The name was called out without avail in her heart, and she sighed. *It is not a loss; it may have become my own burden.* As she randomly thought, Mineva took the lift without waiting for the assistant leader to lead her. No matter where the detention room was, she knew that it was somewhere after taking this lift. *As the person who inherited the Zabi name, I must not let myself be seen being dragged by the arm in such an unkempt manner by the public.*

Part 18[edit]

At that moment, something strange was happening inside the cockpit of the "Unicorn".

The warning lights of the all-view monitor and the display port were turned off, and the display words <La+> appeared again. The power of the monitor was immediately turned off, and the cockpit was covered with real darkness. What replaced it was the visual image of outer space shining vaguely on the linear seat.

The visual that was not processed through CG was similar to what he saw with his naked eyes. The "Kshatriya" that was grappling the machine, the "Sinanju" and the "Geara Zulu" that were probably moving in front were not on the screen. The infinitely deep pitch black

space that was painted with silver powder started to spread out, causing the red <La+> that was in the center of the void to look extremely eyecatching. That word that was floating parallel to the linear seat continued to flicker with the coordinate data, seemingly indicating where the “Unicorn” should head to next.

Banagher did not notice the existence of that light. The attachment was loose, and the body that was floating up slightly from the linear seat was not moving at all. The eyes continued to remain shut as the visor of the helmet was the only thing reflecting the light of the stars. The <La+> light flickering behind did not even reach inside the visor. Banagher left aside the lights that caused him to lose control of his fate and many to gradually sink into chaos—indicating the location of the “Laplace Box”, and passed out in a groggy state.

Volume 4 – Palau Capture Battle

Chapter 1[edit]

Part 1[edit]

“…What did you just say?”

At that moment, Alberto felt the entire world around him distort, and could not help but ask back. (You should have heard that clearly.) A cold voice rang through the speaker of the headphone.

(I don't know how they got in contact with each other, but Banagher Links is definitely Cardeas' son, the son he had with Anna Links after Ellen died.)

Martha Vist Carbine's steel-like face remained unmoved on the monitor that had static noise on it. *Banagher Links, that arrogant boy who boarded the RX-0 without understanding the significance and importance of the machine, who ended up bearing the burden of the Laplace Box…that's right. It was that Links. I definitely heard of this surname before, so why didn't I think of this possibility? Is it because I didn't want to admit it—* Alberto asked his dazed mind and got an answer, and was speechless again because of this shock. The sense of realism was lost from Martha on the monitor and the communication room console, and Alberto continued to feel that his body was distorted together with the world around him.

Is this a plan that was thought out? Or was it all completely unreasonable coincidence? Either way, Cardeas Vist did not just hand the Box over to a random boy who was passing by, but the fate of the family to the child of the woman who could not become his succeeding wife—and also left aside the one person who originally had this right, the one who should inherit this.

(Pull yourself together. It doesn't matter who the "Unicorn" pilot is. The problem is that the machine is already in Neo Zeon's hands. That's a failure on your part, Alberto.)

The sharp voice reached his eardrums, dragging his wavering consciousness back in. Alberto grabbed the mic of the headphone and turned his stare of reliance towards Martha on the 15 inch monitor.

"Bu-but, that was the best option in that situation. Without the "Unicorn", we can protect the Box. I was thinking about letting the "Unicorn" get destroyed there…"

(Results justify everything. I told you before that people will never judge the means, right?)

It looked like it was a casual nudge forward, but in fact, it was a solid leash. Alberto saw that Martha was physiologically wounding him with her usual tone, and all his momentum was killed off. (I've already used up all means that could be used.) The Acting Leader of the Vist Foundation continued on, while all Alberto could do was to listen quietly.

(The Central Government in Dakar received the report about Mineva Zabi being imprisoned, and were panicking over it. Soon after, they'll

be taking action. Just stay over there and see how things develop.)

“Yes…”

(This is a path of no return. You better amend the failure you made. You can do it.)

A path of no return. This line was stuck in Alberto’s heart, causing him to look up, and at this moment, Martha disappeared. He saw his blurry face being reflected on the monitor screen, used his barely numb hand to take down the headphone, and slumped heavily onto the hard chair.

There was no one else in the second communication room located on the bridge block. The narrow and long room had a monitor and console for communications, and two chairs were lit by the reflected light of the power indicator. This facility was meant for unified communication to whichever squadron they belonged to during landing exercises and fleet operations, but the bridge’s communication facilities itself would be enough for the Nahel Argama that would launch alone. This was a place where there would not be much problems for a civilian, who was coincidentally on board, to use as a public phone.

The line here was isolated from the one on the bridge, so there was no worry of the conversation being tapped. The ECOAS surveillance range had not extended here either as only the vague voices of the bridge broadcast could be heard in the room. (Highline Post, get ready to install) (Linking hull at the expected moment. No changes. At the designated time, the Emergency response group are to…) and more messages could be heard. Despite not knowing what they were about, it was most likely that they were preparing to repair the ship. It had been more than 5 hours since the Nahel Argama left the shoal space region to meet the resupply ship the Senate Council sent over, and they were in a situation where it could be said to be absolutely normal.

It had been a day and a half since Neo Zeon attacked and the RX-0, the key to the Box, had been taken away. It was unknown what Martha did, but the Senate Council that was hard to budge finally took action. Their mobile suit squad got wrecked, the Nahel Argama frame had taken obvious damage, but the order to retreat would never come if they took the resupply. The ship was used to carry out a secret mission—and also a ship that housed the heir to the Zabi family, and it would have to continue its journey where the front could not be seen. He had no privacy, could not shower as he wanted, and could not make a call to the psychologist counsellor who he often talked to. His days of being viewed as obstructive and butting heads with Daguza and the ECOAS would still have to continue. “Damn it!” Alberto groaned as he swept aside the headphone on the console.

That would be fine. The stench of the ship's paint and the unique odor of ozone had completely stained his body, and he had to endure that too. What was hard for him to endure was the fact that he was unable to sleep. *That man's* voice dragged his thoroughly fatigued body from sleep together with the air-conditioning and the gust from the motor.

A path of no return…when will I forget the feeling of squeezing that trigger? There was no other way. That man was the one who wanted to break the 100-year worth of order after all. That man left me alone when I've always done the most appropriate thing, so why did he — Alberto clenched his stiff hands.

"Why…am I not the chosen one?"

He squeezed out the voice from deep within his throat, and his trembling body felt the weak gravity behind it. Alberto did not lift his face from the console until this surge of emotions subsided.

Part 2[edit]

The wall was covered with a soft mat used for self-mutilation prevention, and the ceiling had a surveillance camera installed. There were no windows, and the door had a peephole through the doorgrill. The scene for a prisoner detention room was the same for either Federation or Zeon. If there was a difference, it would be that the air-conditioning here would be quieter.

Amidst the silence, the sound of an electronic lock being unlocked was heard. Mineva Zabi sat on the hard mattress of the built-in bed and looked towards the opening door.

It's not mealtime yet…is it a new interrogator? As Mineva thought this way and got ready to get defensive, a familiar face appeared at the door. Mineva did not know what expression to make at this point as she kept her mouth shut. Riddhe Marcenas had his back facing the light from the corridor as he too stared at Mineva with a tense expression.

"Audrey Burne…no, I should be calling you Mineva Zabi, right?"

Riddhe turned his hand to close the door behind him as he said with a somewhat gloomy voice. His eyes had icy cold anger in them. Mineva did not think that a pilot had a need to meet her, and she did not feel that the higher-ups would agree to this. She realized that this was not an official meeting, and clenched her trembling fists as hard as she could. Riddhe casted an unmoving stare on Mineva and said with a suppressed voice, "I often heard the Zabi family's speeches when I was young."

“Gihren Zabi was your uncle, am I right? When his younger brother Garma died on Earth, Zeon carried out a state funeral on its land. It was probably broadcasted throughout the world. About how they should not let Garma’s death be put to waste, that only the citizens of Zeon who were inferior were the elites chosen by heaven, that speech where people kept chanting *Sieg Zeon Sieg Zeon*.”

It had been the day before…no, it seemed that it was two days before since the time both of them snuck into the “Unicorn” hangar secretly and chatted about meaningless things like how she looked like some actress. Riddhe probably spent this time facing reality as he used a stiff expression to restrain the anger and sorrow he was tasting at this point as he walked towards Mineva in his grey officer uniform. Mineva held back the urge to move back as she looked right at Riddhe’s face.

“*Sieg Zeon, Sieg Zeon*…thousands of spectators shouted just like that. It was really a vexing scene. I was just a brat back then, but I remembered that I had goosebumps. What’s with everyone from children to old folks doing the same thing with indifference? Are they robots? Can’t they think for their own? Don’t they think about what they feel?”

Closing in at a distance where their fingertips could touch each other, Riddhe clenched his fists hard, “SAY SOMETHING!” the rude voice caused the air in the narrow detention room to tremble slightly.

“Did Neo Zeon do that too? Making everyone shout Sieg Zeon or something that. Say it here then.”

That expression of his was wavering, unlike the words he said. Riddhe took a short breath and looked away from Mineva’s probing eyes, and yelled “SAY IT!” as he looked aside.

“Say Sieg Zeon. Let me know that you’re the princess of Zeon. If not…”

The stuttering voice had a tinge of crying at the end, silently moisturizing the air in the room. *What is this person here? Why does he look so hurt* Mineva’s chest had this tight feeling as she had this doubt, and she looked up at this young man’s face. *Like me—this person may not be able to find a way to express his thoughts into words. He has so many things he wants to say, to confirm, but everything and anything became shallow before he could speak up.*

“…Never mind. So be it.”

After a long moment of silence, Riddhe ruffled his blond hair and stared at Mineva with a hesitant look. “I heard that you’ve been

keeping quiet about this. How someone with the identity of Mineva Zabi could slip into a Federation ship like this…I think it's not something a pilot like me can ask. I'll leave the rest to the experts."

He said this to affirm himself—no, for himself to hear as he turned back. Mineva saw Riddhe back that felt like he was maturing, and heard him say, "But at least remember something." And lifted her chin.

"A guy once offered his life for a girl called Audrey Burne…that guy kept calling your name until the end. Not Mineva Zabi, Audrey."

Mineva's heart pumped for a moment as the face of the boy who ran alongside her in the alleys of the colony appeared in her mind. Riddhe glanced at her silent face as he quietly walked towards the door. *This man's thinking is too one-sided.* Mineva instinctively thought this way, but this was not enough to wipe away that inexplicable sense of guilt. Thus, she spoke up, "You really don't know anything at all."

Riddhe stopped his hand that was reaching for the door handle. His face that showed shock and some anger turned around, causing Mineva to feel that he was an upright person. She suppressed the rumbling feelings under her chest as she continued, "Who are the experts you're referring to?"

"The inquisitors or anyone related to the judicatory…"

"Nobody from the judicatory will be involved in this. The mission itself won't be exposed, and news of my detainment won't be reported."

It's pointless to talk more, and even if I do, nothing will change, and nothing can be redeemed. Despite this thought, Mineva continued to move her mouth that had been stiff silent for the entire day. Riddhe's expression changed as he turned to Mineva and asked, "What do you mean?"

"Just like what I said. Do you think this operation can be reported?"

"But this incidence and the detainment of Mineva Zabi…"

"If news of my detainment were exposed, Neo Zeon will have to take action. Why is it that Full Frontal was not willing to admit that I'm Mineva Zabi?"

"That's because he doesn't want our side to fight using a hostage…"

Riddhe swallowed back the words he wanted to say next as he shut up. "You'll understand if you think about it carefully." Mineva said as she looked down at the floor.

“The reason why I had not been captured for the past 4 years. The reason why Neo Zeon could built up its arms…”

The passionate Spacenoids’ tragic wish for independence, the sacrifice of countless nameless warriors all by risking their lives for the sake of Neo Zeon’s revival—these were the reasons but ideals alone would not do anything. Even anti-government movements would not be able to have power if the political environment and economy were not working. “You’re saying that this is a planned thing? That the Federation and Neo Zeon set this up?” Riddhe asked, and Mineva took the doubt with a shameful feeling.

“The incident at “Industrial 7” will probably still have some mass coverage, but continuous reporting will disappear within 2 days. This will become an unforgivable phenomenon for those who lost their relatives or friends…but the Spacenoids are already used to the unreasonable acts by the Federation. The Federation had always allowed our existence silently, obviously to use us as a shield for dissentment.”

It was a similar reason as to why police organizations would not hunt down triads seriously. It was similar to preventing the lawbreakers from scattering by uniting them in one trashbag. The Federation and Neo Zeon had been keeping this line, letting this gear of economy—the force called tension spin. In this sense, it would be more appropriate to call them birds of a feather instead of this being just a clever ploy. “This is the case up till now.” Mineva added these words and kept quiet. “…Did the Laplace Box break the balance between both sides?” Riddhe mused as he showed an expression that an unknown circuit was connected inside him.

“Yes. But that is probably not all of it. The Federation probably wanted to establish its relationship with Neo Zeon if we consider the fact that a mobile suit like the “Unicorn” was developed. It’s possible to think that because of this, the Vist Foundation moved the Box that had remained sealed up till now.”

Cardeas once said that peace and stability were fragile. In this era, where ideals turned to nothingness, where even the resistance movements had to be ‘managed’, it was a lot easier to slip into the loopholes of the ‘management’. Full Frontal, who had been raising arms under the ‘management’, only to vaguely show his deep intentions to break the current state, was like that. The same goes for the head of the Federation army carrying out the reorganization plan to cut military forces and wipe out Neo Zeon entirely. Cardeas probably wanted to introduce this catalyst, the Laplace Box, in order to turn this

distorted world into something that could be seen by the naked eye. The memories of the War were long gone, and people believed that they could 'manage' war as well. Their senses showed indifference… and they ignored the signs of a great crisis.

Either way, it's useless to think about this again. Mineva looked at how she was being imprisoned and restricted on a Federation ship, and sighed slightly. If it could be as what Riddhe said, if she could be handed over to a public judicatory for a fair trial, she would be able to explain her current situation to more people. However, the chances of this would be bleak here. Once news of her detainment were revealed, Neo Zeon and even the Zeon supporters hidden in the Federation government would follow up and fight against the conservatives for their own political agendas that would continue. As both sides continued to plot, the weary clashes that would be brought about would not be what they wanted. It would still be meaningful to consider Mineva Zabi as missing. *Will I be listed as an anonymous prisoner and get hidden by something? Will I have to change my name and get 'managed'? Or will it be the worst situation where my disappearance will have to be for real…this isn't impossible.*

Of course, it's another thing altogether with the Box. The Federation army will most likely carry out some operation to get back the "Unicorn Gundam" from "Palau". This Nahel Argama will be taking part in that battlefront too, I suppose. In the end, this is just an extended internal battle over the Box, and political muscle alone will not be able to settle things down. Even if the pilot of the "Unicorn" is alive, no one will care about whether he's dead or alive—

“…It’s really hard to understand.”

Mineva heard his musing and stopped her pessimistic thoughts as she lifted her face. She saw the extremely depressing looking Riddhe giving a tired look to the floor.

“I always deemed myself as a pilot. My job is to pilot a mobile suit, to actually finish the task I’m given, and not to think about any other unnecessary things. Even if there may be cons, I believed that the Federation government still has the power to correct it…no, this is just a lie. I just pretended not to look, not to think. It has been the same ever since I remained at ‘‘family…”

It was a reasonable confession, but the term ‘‘family *lingered in Mineva’s ears abnormally for some reason. “Finally, please tell me something.” Riddhe continued as he looked back at Mineva’s eyes.*

“Since you already understand this, why did you still act on your own?”

This was a sincere question, and Mineva was somewhat shocked by Riddhe’s upright stare as she answered with a wary and fearful look, “I

too had a ‘‘family *ever since I was born.”*

“It was a ‘‘family *that bored the crime of the One Year War. Some viewed me as a source of danger, and some would try to promote me as a sign of the revival of Zeon. No matter what, I could not break away from political ties. If the same mistake happened again, I have a duty to stop it even if it means giving up my life.”*

“Even if another danger will happen because of your disappearance?”

“I said it already, did I not? The fact that I’m not around will not be revealed. To the people who treat politics as a way of life, I’m just a piece on a chessboard. However, this is not what politics should be about.”

As she talked with Riddhe, Mineva realized that the vague thing she felt was forming into shape. “What the person at the scene should carry out…responsibility and duty, is that it?” Riddhe muttered to himself, and suddenly gave a determined stare to a corner of the wall. Mineva saw that he was looking for something, and inadvertently followed the stare, thinking about what the *family* Riddhe Marcenas was about. If it were the name Marcenas, the first thing she thought about was be the Prime Minister of the violent Federation Government…

“Oi, Riddhe. You should restrain yourself there.”

The voice suddenly butted in, interrupting Mineva’s thoughts. A guard with a helmet on appeared on the other side of the door grill’s peephole.

“It’s almost time for a swap. Even you can’t get away easily if you’re caught.”

Got it. I’ll go out now.”

Riddhe nodded slightly at him, and turned to Mineva again. At this moment, Mineva noticed that the power indicator of the surveillance camera above Riddhe’s head was not lit.

“I understand very well that you should be the one standing amongst the crowd to speak up. At the same time, I realize that I may not know anything at all.”

The stare that was much calmer than how it was when Riddhe entered the room showed his outstanding learning ability. “But you’re a person of Zeon.” He wordlessly looked back at Mineva, who heard his stiff voice and clenched the fists on her knees tightly.

“We were once close privately, but you’re still our enemy, the one who caused Squad Leader Norm to die. I can’t forgive you like this.”

It’s to be expected for someone who has such emotions. Mineva understood that this feeling would cause people to make mistakes or save them, and took the show of determination of the youth in front of her with all she got. Riddhe turned around, and this time, really held onto the door handle.

“…I really hoped that we met somewhere else.”

Mineva could not speak up, and she had no time to answer. Riddhe quickly stepped out of the door and closed it to cover his back. The sound of the electronic lock activating reverbed. It remained in the one-person detention room for a while before disappearing.

Mineva sighed and leaned on the wall with the mat. She, who felt emotional, was so tired that she felt shocked. *There was no one who could learn anything or be saved through words.* She felt that she was the one who really did not know anything as she looked around the dim detention room.

If he can survive, Banagher will probably be detained like this. Mineva blankly thought of this in her mind, which became heavy as she closed her eyes. She, who had never taken a single nap ever since she was detained, did not take much more time to fall into a deep sleep.

Part 3[edit]

The sound of the electronic lock being opened rang, and what replaced it was the sound of knocking. Banagher Links’ face left the window of the ship as he stared at the people appearing at the door.

As expected, Marida Cruz was standing there. Her shirt comprised of a crimson fabric with gold embroidery, matching the white pants that showed the figure of her legs. Her collar had the emblem of Zeon, the wings on it, and Marida's eyes above that were glowing quickly scanned the room. Marida knew that Banagher did not have the strength to resist, but her cat-like stare would not relax as she showed no openings. The slender body that looked like it was in tight-fitting clothes stepped into the room and put the food tray on the simple table.

Including this time, it had been two days since she brought food in. Including the time he passed out, it had been two days since he was detained in this ship. Banagher glanced at the food tray that had some randomly microwaved food, and stared at the side of Marida’s face as she wore the uniform of the “Sleeves”. The only noteworthy things in

the cabin were the bed, the simple table, and the 30cm wide window, and her clear figure which looked rather glamorous.

He recovered in the infirmary, and was then treated, questioned and detained. It was basically a repeat of his predicament in the Nahel Argama, but the air flowing inside -this ship was basically different. *What's the name of this ship? Where's it heading? What about the "Unicorn" that's taken in as well?* Even when he asked, he would not get an answer. When he stubbornly asked them, he got a killing stare. Besides, this was a ship belonging to the "Sleeves"—Neo Zeon. It could not be helped, but Banagher was already enemies with them.

I've already explained that he was not a Federation soldier, and also about how I met Audrey. It seems from the attitude of the interrogator, that I won't have to worry about being treated cruelly, but I can't relax here. Any treatment may happen as long as I'm involved with the "Unicorn". I might be drugged and questioned, tied up to a chair or something, forced to spill out everything, and become a vegetable— Banagher beat away these unstable thoughts as he continued to stare at Marida's actions. At this moment, her face suddenly turned, and the sapphire blue eyes stared at Banagher without hesitation.

Banagher unwittingly gasped as he did not have time to even pull back as he was grabbed on the chin from behind and lifted. He was easily lifted right in front Marida, and their faces were right in front of each other. The deep blue eyes blinked as they stared at Banagher's eyes. The soft and gentle body odor reached Bangher's nose, who thought *So a female's sweat is sweet* in an inappropriate situation, only to be clumsily pushed backwards as he stuttered a few steps.

Banagher landed on the bed with his backside and immediately got up. Marida said with a straight expression "Your eyes are still bloodshot. Use this." and took out something from her pocket before tossing it to Banagher.

It was a spray canister that was large enough to be held in the hand. Obviously, it was an eye ointment that was meant to be used under zero gravity. "The weakest organs under gravity in a human body are the eyes." Marida continued, and Banagher stared back at her blankly.

“It’s not weird for the eyeballs to pop out the way you were shaken at such speed. Rest your eyes as much as you can.”

Marida turned her back on Banagher without waiting for an answer. The orange-tinge chestnut-colored hair that was tied in a knot—like what he saw at “Industrial 7” was gently released, and it seemingly mocked him as it swayed about like it was a kid. “Looks like you don’t know anything at all.” Banagher held onto the eye ointment tightly and retorted back,

“Are these the feelings of a soldier, or a terrorist?”

Banagher took the strength of Marida’s lower body head on as he turned around. It was an expression that showed that she could use violence, one full of killing intent. As he did not succumb to this when he met her, it forcefully changed his fate after that. No, not just him; but also the fates of all the people in “Industrial 7”.

He did not know what Marida did in that battle, but she was definitely one of the people who caused “Industrial 7” to be in such a huge mess. *Even if she shows concern, I can’t let my guard down easily. Banagher used his trembling legs to steady himself on the low-gravity floor, and continued staring back at Marida, who answered back,*

“You’re rather talkative after knowing that you won’t be killed.”

The ounce of strength that was supporting Banagher was reduced to nothing once that unwavering voice stated his true thoughts. He could not find anything else to retort back about as he looked away.

“I feel that I am a soldier, but we will have differing opinions. There are armies who use hostages just to be saved.”

“That’s because…”

“The worst kind of people are those who will only criticize and not do anything on their own.”

The forceful force caused the rebuttal Banagher was about to spew out from his mouth to dissipate. He swallowed his saliva and could only stare at the sapphire blue eyes that reminded him of the deep sea.

“You took action to help the Princess, so that’s why you’re being treated as such. In other words, you’re already a part of it.”

“This is…too one-sided. The reason why I’m allowed to live is because you want to understand the “Unicorn” more, right?”

“That’s one of the reasons too.”

“What about Audrey? She’s been preventing the Laplace Box from falling into Neo Zeon’s hands. Which do you think is more important? The Box or Audrey?”

“It’s not our job to decide these things.”

Marida turned her face away, seemingly trying to block out these words. Banagher realized that he seemed to have touched on a topic he should not have mentioned, and immediately shut up.

“Soon, we’ll reach our home. All the decisions will be made there. Rest whenever you can.”

“Home…?”

It was not a base or a headquarters, and the unfamiliar term home caused Banagher to frown. Marida touched the strands of hair beside her collar and gently used her chin to point at the other side of the window.

The Moon, Earth and Sun could not be seen in this bright space that was radiating with silver stars. At a point, a black shadow shaped like a bow was there. It was hard to tell the scale of it, but it did not look like a mere piece of rock floating in the shoal space region. If the lights were space navigation lights for the ships, the size of it should be bigger than a space colony. Perhaps it was a mining asteroid? Banagher brought his face as close to the small window as possible as he stared at this oddly-shaped rock. The sun in the distance shone on the tip of the bow-shaped rock, giving the vibe that it was at least the size of an asteroid. Multiple such asteroids were linked to each other, forming a bow-shaped large planet—

“That’s “Palau”, our home.”

Marida said. Banagher moved his face slightly as he did not turn his stare away from the unknown world in front of him. The rocky surface full of craters was lit with numerous lights, and the asteroid called “Palau” showed its silent face in the middle of the eternal night.

Part 4[edit]

The base, a space colony, was built as part of the space migration plan, so obviously, it required a large number of resources. The number of resources they could extract from Earth was not enough ultimately, and cost-wise, it would not be effective to move materials from the atmosphere. Thus, the people in the old century turned their eyes on the Moon. They built a lasting resource extraction base on the Moon, and the next step was the Asteroid Belt that existed in the

region between Mars and Jupiter, a field abundantly rich in resources.

It was a hive of rocks that could not come together to form a planet because of the powerful gravity of Jupiter near it. In this belt, he floating asteroids there amounted to at least hundreds of thousands based on the observations in the old century, and it was said that there were millions of them. The overall mass of these rocks were said to be 1/35 the mass of the Moon, and most of them had outstanding minerals. Of course, these asteroids were not so concentrated that they had to be explained on an encyclopedia, and they were all sporadically scattered amongst the wide space. However, it was not impossible to lock onto a single asteroid and send an excavation team from the Earth Celestial Sphere. Also, once they knew that there was an asteroid that was suitable for mining, they would install nuclear pulse engines on it and head back to Earth on their shuttle. To humanity, which had welcomed the Universal Century, this was not a tough thing to do.

Amongst them, the most famous was the small asteroid Juno that was in the Moon's orbit during UC 0045, dubbed "Luna II". In the year 0060, it was made a military base called Luna Two. One purpose was to act as the largest headquarters for the Federation Army, while the other was to continue the mining activities. "Palau" was one of these mining space colonies as well. This colony was so isolated that nobody other than the people involved in colony business would know of, but it had an extraordinary history. It was said that some of the smaller colonies were dragged in from the Old Century. The added condition to the mentioned part was because "Palau" was built by having many small asteroids linked to each other, which accounted for its unique bow-shape.

Simply put, a triangular block protruding out from the tip of the bow, and the bottom comprised of 3 irregularly shaped rocks connected to each other tightly. The 4 blocks that were too small to be called asteroids were connected by multiple shafts, and it would be hard to tell that they were not asteroids unless one looked from up close. This "Palau" was a mining satellite that was 30+km wide, 15km long in diameter maximum , and looked like some realistic imagery.

As with any mining satellite, the surface of the rocks had countless space gateways and monitors. The main portion, the triangular block had two round cylinders of living areas, and each embedded on 6km wide caves on the rock surfaces. There were approximately 30,000 people living in the residential area that was maintained by centrifuge force, just like a space colony. It seemed that these people lived by mining. That was Maridas's explanation. The ship Banagher was on—

the Neo Zeon' flagship "Rewloola" entered "Palau" together with the "Garencieres" that was disguised as a trading ship.

The ships did not enter from the space gateway on the surface, but got in through a gap where the 4 blocks of rock were leaning and attached to each other. Banagher understood that the structure was the inner hollow that was dug out, creating a 'port' that could not be seen from the outside. However, this was all he could tell from the window of the hull. As the pressurizing rock formation and the large intertwined shafts were right in front of the windows, Banagher thought that they finally made it through, only to be taken out of the room. The moment his view expressed, he felt that he saw several ships docked in the enclosed conical-shaped space and mobile suits moving around, but Marida held onto his head, allowing him no time to check. Banagher was accosted outside, took the standard precautionary checks, and stepped onto "Palau".

He had no chance to see the entire port. He passed through the zero gravity block, moved to a structure that looked like a terminal, and saw a chartered linear car waiting for them. This was a similar kind of transportation as the "Subway" used in the space colony, but they were really moving underground. Amongst the passengers, there were several men said to be crew of the "Garencieres" other than Marida. They obviously showed a different vibe from the crew of the "Rewloola". Everyone were wearing glamorous looking uniforms with gold lacing, but there was the feeling that these did not fit them. In the old times, there was the saying *Clothes makes the man* , but there seemed to be exceptions to that rule. Perhaps the vibe of not liking fancy outfits outweighed the rest here. Either way, these people had the vibe of being part of a yakuza clan.

From the conversation, it seemed that Marida was a crew member of the "Garencieres". *Why was she the only one on the "Rewloola" and taking care of me?* Banagher did not have time to think as the linear car moved, while the scenery outside the window was filled with rocks. After 5 minutes, they came out of the passage, and the excavation field that was dug into "Palau" appeared right in front of him. He looked like a primary school student experiencing a field trip as he stuck his face on the wall, not moving at all.

The excavation field seemed to pass through the triangular conical star, approximately 400m in diameter and more than 10km in length. This extraordinarily large space was surrounded by multiple network-like shafts. It was said that these shafts were connected to the living quarters and the port and other places. The final point of the excavation field however had an automatic firing system—a Mass

Driver. It looked like it would shoot out the minerals that were dug out. Banagher deduced this from what he saw from the window, and basically, the facilities in the mining field reminded Banagher of his old home.

The factories that were near the walls of the cave did not seem to be working, and the mining machinery placed all over showed no signs of operating. Everything was covered in rust and dust, and there was the sense of a reddish-brown color fading in with the rocks. There were a few mini mobile suits moving the rocks, flying around numbly in the work environment without gravity, but the models were so old it was scary. Half of the solar panels of the artificial Sun could not be seen, and a mere sunset-like light was shown. Only the term 'emptiness' could describe the current scene beside the abandoned quarry there.

"It was not like this before. About 50 years ago, when the building of colonies was rampant, the chimneys here would be giving off smoke. It was said that people could not see the other level because of the smoke that was puffing out…however, the rocks here were not of outstanding minerals. Ever since mining excavation began here, there would be some other bits of stone mixed in to add up, and they managed to somehow bluff their way through. Right now, we've finished digging up as much as we can, and we only dig up some spare change."

The one sitting beside him, Gilboa Sant, looked outside the window as he said. As a crew member of the "Garencieres", he was an earnest looking black man who looked to be approximately 30. Also, he seemed to be a citizen native to this "Palau". At least, when he was Banagher's age, this place was not called "Palau". When the colony committee decided to close this place down, an investor from somewhere bought this star, and named it "Palau" after the place on Earth that was attacked. Ever since then, "Palau" was designated as a special administrative zone under Side 6, and that investor safely took the role of superintendent. In the old century terms, it was basically buying a desolated island from a country. He could call himself a superintendent, but in fact, he was like a villager. Gilboa explained to Banagher,

"In the past, the Republic of Zeon once had a space base called "Solomon", right? It seemed that this "Palau" was named because of the place that was attacked. Both these names were names of islands on Earth, but Solomon was the name of a king in a myth, and had nothing to do with that island. Anyway, they're just trying to being trendy."

Simply put, everyone on “Palau” was a full-fledged Zeon supporter. He probably hoped that there would be special needs after the war as he continued to buy mining quarries that could not be run while providing these resources to Neo Zeon. The Side 6 that became a pivotal point everyone knew of during the war was said to have some secret relations with the Republic of Zeon. If the superintendent allowed, it was not impossible to hide from the Federation’s eyes at this place. This was the case after the Second Neo Zeon War, when the government actively purged the remnants of Zeon.

We’ve now entered the phase of exterminating in this Zeonism War the Federation declared this, but had not done anything to the entire satellite that was filled with resources and made into a base. Banagher’s dull mind was stimulated because of this, and it seemed to let him understand that the ‘relationship’ between the Federation and Neo Zeon was not as what he imagined, but he did not have the time to think more. The bearded man who was travelling with them glanced over at Gilboa who was rattling out careless, giving a look to tell him to stop, and Banagher unwittingly looked into this bearded man’s stare.

He was the man the crew called the captain. Ever since they met, Banagher had been wondering, *Those were the eyes alright.* He was the man who pointed his gun at Banagher in “Industrial 7”. He met the blond guy beside before, and recalled. *Speaking of which, that ship that ruined my job by docking in that morning was the “Garencieres”.*

They were already implicated with this situation right from the beginning. The man who chased after the stowaway Audrey and sent Marida over was most likely this guy—this captain called Zinnerman. Banagher looked over at Zinnerman, and sat down on the seat that was slanted at the front. *If these guys never came, “Industrial 7” would be okay.* The rage swelled up in him as the fear that they controlled his fate exploded at the same time, causing both emotions to form a vortex within him. However, Zinnerman did not look at Banagher anymore. Gilboa shrugged as he stopped talking too, leaving only the sound of the linear car moving.

Banagher sighed as he looked at Marida, who was looking at the back of Zinnerman’s head as she sat on a seat opposite. Those sapphire blue eyes were looking like she was being loyal to her superior, oozing with an odd sense of passion. Her tense face was rather outstanding amongst the other crew members who were randomly looking around and relaxed.

What kind of relationship do they have? Banagher could not find words to ask, and had no courage to ask as his eyes escaped to the window.

There was a large quarry below the linear car, below the shafts on the walls—though it was a meaningless description under this zero gravity environment. They sped on, reached a fork soon after, turned towards a cave, and the car moved towards one of the many shafts.

The quarry passed his eyes, and the narrow passage again surrounded the linear car. For a moment, darkness visited the car, covering Marida's worried looking expression

Part 5[edit]

The group got off the linear car that reached its destination and got on the elevator leading to the residential area. As he felt the unique feeling of his abdominal muscles, the elevator descended 800m, sending Banagher's group to the gravity block of the "Palau".

The group did not head for the city located within the walls, but went through the lobby and head for another underground passage. It looked to be a service route for work as they passed through many gates that were defended by armed guards. As Zinnerman and Marida quickly moved on, Banagher inadvertently stopped to look past the other side of the gate.

The pillars supporting the roads had become round ones with cravings, and the walls had a grassy green fabric with Arabian patterns hanging off them. The worn out wall lights lit the red carpet that was laid all over the place. Waiting at the end was the large archway-shaped doors were two soldiers dressed in khaki uniforms, a short mantle, and wide rimmed helmets, giving an aged feeling. They were the same as the Republic of Zeon soldiers that were thought in history textbooks. The remnants of a defeated country, what looked like dead souls of soldiers that escaped a war museum were looking back at Banagher.

Zinnerman stood in front of the door, wearing a black shirt with gold laces. The Zeon soldiers gave a salute, and swiftly opened the door. The space acting as the staff room, which may be too big, appeared behind the door, causing Banagher to gasp a second time. The ceiling inside should be around 2 levels tall, and the 4 round pillars had spiral shaped carvings. There was an oil painting hanging above the electric heater that seemed to be for heating purpose <--!Didn't make this up-->, and the curtains draped on both left and right sights gave a solemn feeling that was hard to tell if they were antiques. The unevenness of the teeth-shaped ornaments could be seen on the beam, and even the ceiling lights cover had similar carvings that showed the delicate skill of the craftsman. All the furniture showed some form of balance, and yet showed a luxury that one might mistake to be nobility in a palace.

Despite looking antique, it had no semblance to past designs. Banagher was overwhelmed by this scene that could only be described as Zeonism as he remained stunned. The Vist family too had an antique feel, but it was different. If the Vist family's scene could be described as being based on luxury, this would give goosebumps while looking like it was meant to intimidate others. It looked to be an expression of culture by the people sent from Earth to the furthest Side, made after they got over their self-defeat—as they lost the Republic, they could only live in the dusty-smelling depths of the caves, a sand habitat that was like a flash in the pan. Banagher did not feel fear or uneasy, just weird as he stared at the anomaly sitting right in front of him.

That man was wearing a red uniform, wearing a mask as he faced Banagher. *Is he a human?* This was the first impression Banagher had. He could not detect any sense of lift from that man, not just from the mask covering his eyes, but also the vibe that he was artificially created. He stared at the masked man who sat on the Mahogany made office table, and seriously thought that it might really be part of the decorations in the room. However, that man said "I admit, this is not in good taste.", shocking him.

"The superintendent of this "Palau" is a supporter of the old Zeon republic. Our army did not request anything from him when we regrouped, but he built this command post. It's said that he replicated the interior decorations final base of the old republic army—A Baoa Qu."

It was hard to tell if it was the mask talking in front of Banagher, as that was a slightly chilly voice. The masked man continued as he stared at the silent Banagher, "You have to accept other people's kind intentions honestly."

"Although it doesn't actually fit my tastes, I think it is also one of the required qualities of a leader."

Before Banagher could respond, the stare went through the anti-glare filter and stared right at Zinnerman's group. "It's been tough on you, Captain. You do not have to accompany us here." On hearing this, Zinnerman answered, "Yes, Captain Full Frontal." His heavy voice echoed through the room.

Full Frontal…Banagher stared back at this masked man as Zinnerman and Marida walked out of the room. He heard of this name before. Banagher had an impression of this name being mentioned by someone on the Nahel Argama when he hurriedly launched out. *The Red Comet, the Man called the Second Coming of Char—that's right,*

it's the pilot of that red mobile suit. That Char who appeared on the news during the Republic era too used a mask to cover his face…

"What is it? Please take a seat."

The unexpectedly earnest voice came from below the mask, causing Banagher's mind to rid itself of its arranged thoughts. He resisted the urge to get up as he sat on the sofa beside the heater. A young soldier wearing a white servant uniform immediately closed in and poured red tea into the teacup on the table. As the servant left without looking at him, Banagher sensed that there was another stare looking at him.

It was a young officer standing beside Frontal. Despite wearing a bright green uniform, his sense of presence was covered by the masked man, and Banagher did not notice him…or rather, perhaps he was deliberately trying to keep a low profile as she stood beside. Either way, the stare on Banagher was exceptionally tight when compared to Frontal's, intimidating Banagher a little. The servant walked out of the room, and the ones left to talk to were him and Frontal. Banagher felt that he was giving a very imposing stare from a corner.

Right beside him, Frontal did not say anything. He put his arms on the table, locking his fists and using them to support his chin, giving a machine-like stare at Banagher. Banagher could not tell where the stare was looking from under the mask, and instead of being fearful, he wanted to know what kind of people they were, and how they intended to deal with him. *If I keep waiting for them to talk, I'll be devoured by the pressure under the mask.* Banagher looked down at the floor once, wiped the sweat on his hands off his knees, and decided to ask, "Excuse me…"

"Are you the man piloting that red mobile suit?"

The young officer quickly narrowed his eyes, and Frontal's lips showed a smile.

"What will you do if I say you were? Are you unable to have tea with an opponent you fought before? Young Banagher Links."

With a voice of ridicule, the observer's stare cling onto him. Banagher understood that his body was being probed, and reacted as his trembling hand reached for the red tea and put it to his lips. He could not taste the flavor or aroma, and even the heat. "Good response." Frontal's voice could be heard clearly.

"However, you never considered the consequences. This is the nature of a pilot."

Frontal casually got up and got closer to Banagher, whose stare was robbed by the lush blond hair while being distracted by the rose in a vase, the only decoration on the table. Up till now, the red rose had been swallowed by the presence of the Red Comet. In this room that was covered with artificial things, this was a blood-colored flower that asserted life…

“I’m Captain Full Frontal. I’m grateful for what you did for Her Highness Mineva. This invitation might be a little violent, so please forgive me for this.”

Frontal stood in front of Banagher and reached his right hand out, while Banagher hurriedly look back at him. He was about to inadvertently respond to Frontal, only to clench his hand that was about to reach out. *No, I can’t let him get his way.* Banagher felt a pulsating pain from his temples as he said cautious, “It might be rude to ask, but may I ask if that mask is really used for hide a wound?”

Frontal showed an unexpected expression on his lips as he put his hand. The young officer over his shoulder gave a more menacing glare, and Banagher looked up at the eyes under the mask.

“If that’s not the case, I hope to see your face.”

“You bastard…!” The young officer muttered as he stepped forward, but Frontal raised his hand to stop him.

“It’s alright, Lieutenant Angelo. Young Banagher is talking about some basic etiquette.”

The young officer called Angelo stopped in his tracks. The stare under the anti-glare filter stared back at Banagher, who took the stare from the person taller than him while exerting strength in his nearly limp knees.

“This might be considered part of a fashion statement. I might say it can be considered a method of propaganda.”

As he said this, the hands covered by the white gloves reached for the mask. *Ah.* As Banagher thought this way, Frontal simply removed the mask.

The clear blue eyes first entered his eyes, and then, the old scars at the middle of his eyebrows was etched his stare. The nose bridge that formed a nice line was not repulsive, giving a nice tension that those young people of Caucasian ethnicity would have. The only thing outstanding was that the cheekbones did not reflect his age, but this may be a thought after comparing the image of Char Aznable in

photos. Basically, there were no actual signs of flaws, and Banagher swallowed the saliva after forgetting to do so as he faced this handsome face that could not be described simply as proper looking.

“I forgot to take it off because no one would honestly say it out like you. My apologies.”

This time, Frontal put his mask under the armpit and reached his hand out again. This time, there was no reason to refuse as Banagher held on his again. The hand under the glove felt rather hard, causing Banagher to remember the first impression of a puppet he had in his mind, but this may be because of the bad feelings he had when he ended up caught in the other party’s pace. Banagher decided to control himself as he held back from thinking further.

“I heard you met Her Highness Mineva.”

Frontal stepped back towards his table, and spoke, “However, as for how the mobile suit of the Vist Foundation…the “Unicorn” was handed to you, there’s still a lot I don’t understand. That was a machine our army should receive, so why did Cardeas Vist choose you to carry the Laplace Box…”

“I said it before. I don’t know any specifics in this.”

Banagher supported his body that was questioned out of a sudden as he said while seemingly interrupting the other party’s words. Frontal put his mask on the table and turned to Banagher, asking as he sat on the chair, “Is that so?”

“The Vist Foundation managed to maintain its prosperity and riches as they secretly kept the Box. There must be a plan that could not be changed easily for the Vist Foundation to break the negotiation with the Federation government. The initial plan was messed up, but it’s hard to believe that Cardeas would hand the Box over to a random passer-by. It’s natural to view you as someone related to the Foundation in someone, like for example…”

Frontal did not let go of the moment when Banagher inadvertently looked up, narrowed his eyes and continued, “Let’s say, you already were someone related to the Vist family…how about that?”

“Do I have a duty to answer?”

Banagher blurted out these words as his heart suddenly raced. Sharp footsteps could be heard as the young officer called Lieutenant Angelo walked towards Banagher. His hand suddenly reached for Bangher’s chest without warning.

His expression showed no signs of the old poker face as he showed real killing intent. In his old hometown, Banagher often saw people with some random problems showing such an expression out of a sudden as their faces overlapped with this young officer. As he felt this icy feeling from the bottom of his heart, Frontal interjected, “I said to stop it, Angelo.”

The tense-looking brows forced out wrinkles as he finally let go of Banagher grudgingly. His back was turned at Banagher, showing no signs of openings, and his footsteps obviously looked like he trained in this, but not enough to wipe off the first impression Banagher had of him—that he had a very bad background. Frontal waited for Angelo to return behind him, and silently continued, “You don’t have a duty to answer.”

“However, we still want information on the Box. It’s because of the factor that is Her Highness Mineva that we’re asking you in such a gentle manner. I hope you remember this.”

It was an obviously threatening line, and one that could give a chill. Banagher clenched his sweaty hands and answered, “That Mineva… Audrey once told me.”

“She said that the Box must not be handed over to Neo Zeon, or there’ll be another great war.”

“Oh.” Frontal merely continued without wavering, “If we consider what happened at “Industrial 7”, I would have the same feeling as he.” Banagher got up and tried to argue back.

“She’s the Princess of Zeon, right? If Audrey argues against it, why are you…”

“Then, do you believe in the existence of the Laplace Box?”

This was a question Banagher had never thought of. Frontal stared at the speechless Banagher as he gradually continued,

“Do you feel that no one had saw and validated the contents of the Box, whether it had the power to topple the Federation government?”

“Well…I don’t know. But I think there’ll be something like knowledge or information that could cause the world’s balance to collapse.”

“For example?”

“Like for example…how Zeon first let a space colony fall, or how they destroyed an asteroid and sent it to Earth to force it to freeze. It’s nothing after hearing it, but who would have expected such things to

happen? The invention of nukes, and the horrifying wars that happened in the old ages…and it's the same for the development of Minovsky Particles and mobile suits. They're right beside us, yet no one noticed. A little invention or discovery will allow the world's balance to change slightly…

Banagher did think of saying this when he was with Audrey before this, but even he was shocked that he could express himself so fluidly like this. "Correct." Frontal again got up from his seat after concluding.

"This isn't something that can be understood by memorizing a timeline. From the way you explain things, you should know that Spacenoids were once part of the civilian abandonment plan, right?"

An unexpected line was tossed right back at Banagher, causing him to answer back with only silence. Frontal left the office and walked with a stroll-like pace as he closed in on Banagher.

"In the past, Zeon Deikun once said that only those people who came to space could head for innovation. This meant that humanity got used to its environment and evolved…Newtypes. To the bureaucrats who sending the leftover population to space and remained on Earth, this thinking itself basically toppled their standpoint. That's why they suppressed Zeonism and Side 3 that was promoting it. This is an example of what you say can cause the world to topple."

The boots let out a tapping sound on the floor as he got behind Banagher, who was unable to turn behind.

"In the end, Zeon was assassinated, and the Zabi family rose up from it to build the Republic of Zeon. They chose to fight back the Federation government's suppression with force. The 'inventions' of mobile suits and colony drop fighting was the result of the power given to Zeon Republic to match the Federation. Humanity lost half its population, but it could be seen as a deliberate reduction in population Gihren Zabi planned when he used racism to replace Zeonism.

Everyone knew right now that Zeon was killed by the Zabi family's treachery. The Zeon Republic had such a crime, and after a year's war, it fell defeated. However, this helped the Federation's call, causing the Earth Central Administration to expand every day. The people who step into space would not be allowed back on Earth without the government's permission. Despite each Side's autonomous rule being recognized, the authority of the leaders were still held by the Central government. Spacenoids had basically no right to take part in politics when they could not elect the Senate Council. During this time, Earth continued to develop again under the name of recovering from

the war, and 2 billion residents lived on space produce and food. In the end, the tens of billions of Spacenoids who were forced to migrate in order to let Earth recover naturally were still accomplices in destroying Earth."

Frontal got behind Banagher as he said while sticking close to his nick. Banagher felt goosebumps by this jolt that basically felt like it was melting his body.

"Our Neo Zeon do have believers in the Zabi family's customs. Some believed in Zeon Deikun's ideals, and dreamed of building a real Republic of Zeon. However, their common goal is to change this twisted system. To break the shackle of the Federation, to fulfill self-autonomy for Spacenoids, we should—"

"BUT TERRORIST ATTACKS AREN'T TO GO!"

Banagher stopped the voice that was seeping through his pores as he yelled, "NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF LOGIC IT IS, IT'S NOT RIGHT TO ROB OTHER PEOPLE OF THEIR LIVES ONE-SIDEDLY. NO ONE HAS THAT RIGHT!"

He remembered that none of Micott's friends were left alive, not even a fingernail as they were turned into dust, and their ugly corpses caused Banagher to puke. And then, there was that man—Cardeas Vist's cooling blood. He felt these sensations that were still on his palms *I'm not wrong here,* Banagher told himself. *Humans should live like humans and die like humans. I definitely can't allow for other people to cut other people's lives down like that.* As he repeated this in his heart, Frontal's presence near the neck left, and asked another question to make him doubt, "Then, what about you who fight with a Gundam?"

"If all military forces are full of guilt, you're the same for using the "Gundam". Because of you, we lost one of our precious soldiers."

"Because of you…?"

Banagher was pushed away by an invisible hand as he felt that he tripped and missed his footing. "It was a stray shot, but you're the one who shot it. This fact will not change." Frontal continued as he walked back to the table. His back looked rather distorted, and Banagher felt that he was sliding into a bottomless abyss that opened below his feet as he merely stood there blankly. *What is he saying? When did it happen? I didn't feel that I hit any enemy suits. I was just squeezing the trigger in a mindless manner.*

This me here, killed a person…

“Call Zinnerman in.”

Frontal’s voice sounded rather distant. Banagher sensed that Angelo was picking up the internal phone, but his body and mind could not move. *I have to think. I have to think of something before I’m swallowed into this bottomless abyss.* The more he got anxious, the more his thoughts got erratic, and he knew that his fingertips were becoming cold and stiff. This shell called Banagher Links was collapsing, gradually becoming something else—

“You still have lots to learn. I hope you’ll understand more about us. After that, I’ll be grateful if you can become of outstanding assistance to us.”

Frontal said. He picked up the mask on the table, and seemingly at that moment, Zinnerman and Marida entered the room. *Are both of them gasping because they just saw Frontal’s true appearance?* A slight electric wave passed through Banagher’s mind as he wanted to turn to the duo behind him, but was unable to do move. During this time, he could tell that Marida’s arm was reaching for his shoulder, forcing him to turn back, and his rooted feet finally managed to take a step.

Banagher was dragged off like this as he was accosted to the archway-shaped doors. Right before he was about to pass it, it stopped, and turned back to look at Frontal at the table. He ignored Marida’s surprised stare as she stopped, and let out a hoarse voice, “Excuse me…”

“Are you Char Aznable?”

Zinnerman, who was standing beside him, frowned as he turned his stare to Frontal. Angelo shot a menacing glare to Banagher for a moment, only to turn his awaiting stare at the owner of the mask. Even Banagher himself was not sure why he asked such a thing. However, his thought of deciding things based on the response had not changed as he stared at Frontal who already had his mask on. Frontal focused his stare on the lone flower on the table,

“The me now stipulates myself as a vessel.”

“Vessel…?”

“This vessel here is used to carry the thoughts of the people who were abandoned into space, and inherit the grand wish of those who inherit Zeonism. If they hope for it, I’ll become Char Aznable. This mask exists for that.”

Frontal lifted his stare that was covered by the anti-glare mask and looked back at Banagher. The earnest expression was looking back at him, and for a short moment, he lost his voice. However, a mask was a mask, not a true face. *Perhaps I might not have seen the true appearance of this man?* Banagher recalled the beautiful blue eyes, and felt that he was following an illusion as he lost all strength to talk and walked out of the room.

Banagher glanced behind before the doors closed. The lips under the mask seemed to be smiling at the lone flower. The bright rose and Angelo's heinous face showed a refreshing feeling beside the mask.

Part 6[edit]

The door was closed, and he inadvertently sighed. Angelo Sauper checked himself for feeling this unknown pressure, felt a little enraged, and asked Frontal beside him, "Is this alright?"

"Zinnerman's experienced in this. Leave it to him."

Frontal answered with an emotionless expression. Despite not talking too much, their thoughts could connect. Angelo felt relieved by how he could feel this like usual, and recalled that it was not the same when the boy was around, and felt incensed by this. *The Captain actually left me out of focus when Banagher Links was around…*

"I'm more concerned about the Federation's movements compared to this. According to how the situation goes, we may have to abandon this palce."

Angelo did not know if his feelings reached Frontal who stated some pragmatic things. He said, "He…as in "Palau, Sir?" he asked.

"That mobile suit has something to do with the Box alright. Once the mobile suit got taken away, the Federation will be desperate. It's correct to view that the political safety "Palau" offers has disappeared."

"You mean the Federation will take action here?"

"A very high possibility. They're probably try attacking here in a full-scale battle."

From the number of ships moving in and out of "Palau", there's a high chance that the Federation casted us away. A weak group must remain tense in order to maintain a large and fat organization. The thrill of them attacking with a weak attitude is enough. It's about to begin. The time to shed the sheepskin of Federation 'management' has come. The time for the Neo Zeon army to revive has arrived. Angelo secretly held back the rising sensation in him as he stared at this man

who should be the king of the New World. Frontal took the rose and put it near his lips, lowering his head as he continued, “How’s the investigations of the “Unicorn” goin?”

“We’re using the information Anaheim provided. We’re analyzing the OS at this moment.”

“NT-D…they call it the Newtype-Drive, is it? It’s fishy.”

Angelo though it was the smell of the rose at that moment as he let out a voice “Eh?” At this moment, Frontal got up, and said,

“Anaheim said that it was a mobile suit designed based from the data of the “Sinanju”, but I don’t think that’s it. I could feel a form of madness from that “Gundam”. Tell them to hurry up with their analysis. Maybe Cardeas Vist handed the key of the Box to an unbelievable monster.”

Frontal slowly handed over the rose in his hands over to Angelo, and did not look at him as he left. The reliable shoulders were showing fatigue. “Yes!” Angelo straightened his back as he watched Frontal leave from the office. The crimson red bed left the archway doors, and once his back disappeared from the closing doors, Angelo finally looked back at the rose he received.

In this quarry satellite, it was hard to obtain even a stalk of rose. This was ordered from the florist the superintendent used, and sent from neighboring colonies to be grown here. It was Angelo’s job to put the rose on Frontal’s table everyday. *Did The Captain notice that I’m the one who chose the vase?* Angelo suddenly thought as he turned his stare to the vase that was standing there in a lonely manner, and recalled the ‘vessel’ Frontal said before.

“He’s so tired, and yet wants to bear the fate of the world…”

Angelo looked back at the rose in his hands. The deep red petals that marveled the shortness of life exerted its will in a suffocating manner. *The Captain’s color… the color of flames that burned his body. This is the color of that man who saw the abyss of this space, and is coming back to this world with destiny on his back*. Angelo suddenly could not control his impulses as he crushed the stem of the rose with all he got.

“He actually let that kind of boy see his true appearance…!”

The blood that dripped from his fist flowed down the stem, staining the floor.

Part 7[edit]

The toughness of the hand that held his back was trained through guns. Daguza Mackle felt relieved by this usual strength.

“it’s been a while, Daguza Squad’s commander. You’re looking rather bad there, aren’t you?”

The Arabian ethnicity was shown on Commander Nasri Razal’s black skin as he showed an earnest smile. He was 43 years old, short, but had a firm body that looked rather lively, and he was definitely competent in leading the strong warriors of ECOAS. Daguza covered his left arm that had a cast on it as he answered, “Don’t mention it.”

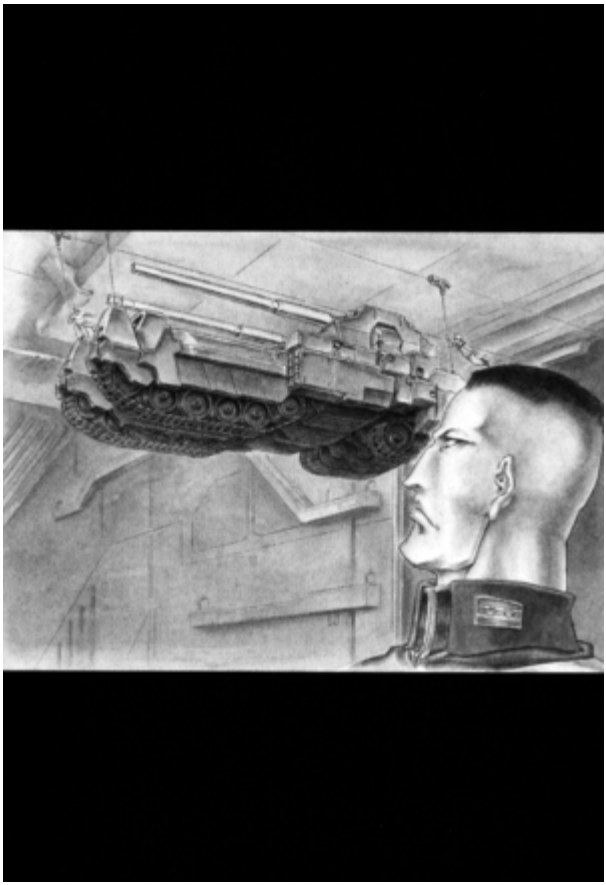
“Unlike you, I’m working hard here.”

“That’s called reaping what you sow. You’re too serious. Isn’t it the same as the mock battle before? What’s with you? Common sense says that you have to go easy if there’s no General here to obvious.”

“I feel that we did go easy.”

“You sure can say that. Our squad was messed around by yours. I’ll pay this debt soon.”

Speaking till here, Nasri kept his smile and tapped his boots, giving a solid salute. “ECOAS 729 reporting with Nasri Razal and 24 members. We shall now join forces with ECOAS 920 as of this moment.” Daguza too raised his hand to salute back at Nasri’s energetic voice. At this moment, Nasri’s forces were moving in machinery as a “Loto” suspended by cables was moving up to the mobile suit deck in tank form. Daguza put his hand down and looked at the machinery being moved in together with Nasri who ended his salute.



The vehicle with the squad serial number 729 etched on it was a long-ranged support type with two barrels of cannons protruding out. Daguza was relieved to see the backup equipment they requested, and a few ECOAS members were surrounding the vehicle to check on it. The “Loto” being moved in was equipped with 4 rapid-fire Gatling cannons, and including the ammunition, all sorts of supplies were being loaded on the deck. Daguza confirmed these as he heaved a sigh of relief while Nasri did not realize it. *Despite these formalities, such equipment won’t be enough. But at least we have a minimum amount of preparation. Our side is finally released from being on standby in this shoal space region, and now we can think of the next step—*

It had been 72 hours since they fought Neo Zeon twice. This thought was prevalent amongst the crew who were on the Nahel Argama as well. They looked up at the equipment that was passing through the two suspensions hanging near the ceiling towards the access gateway, looking like they missed their friends as they moved around the mobile suit deck. The ECOAS reinforcements that were following Nasri stood

right behind. There were 4 carriers and all sorts of spare parts used to repair the severely damaged ship. The supply ship that was connected to this ship was able to send these goods over, and the empty mobile suit deck became a lot livelier. The portside catapult that was blown off could not be saved, but the ship's repair was not bad enough to cause much of a problem, so they should be able to get away from their current drifting state.

However, they would have to see if the Senate Council gave any unreasonable commands or not before everyone could relax. It was rather efficient of them to be able to prepare such a resupply in such a short time, including their beloved ECOAS, but even the Senate Council's orders would not be enough for this mobilization. Leaving aside the ECOAS "Loto", they had only 5 working mobile suits in this ship. The ship's repairs were done on those parts that would be used in battle. "I saw it from the outside. You were wrecked." Nasri said, and it did not seem like sarcasm to Daguza.

"The mobile suit deck is basically empty…common sense wise, I feel that we should dock first, but the higher-ups want us to continue fighting in this situation?"

"Do you feel uneasy?"

"Nope. We're just hear for a ride and wreck some stuff. It has nothing to do with our operation."

The fearless expression was hidden in Nasri's black eyes as his beard-covered lips were curled up, "Then, where do you want us to start work?"

Daguza's Squad 920, Nasri's 729. The organization's history was not little in any sense, but it was the first time in history that two squads of ECOAS would be working together. Daguza saw Nasri shake things off with a relaxed expression, and was about to talk about the operation strategy they never mentioned before, only to hear an excited voice, "AWESOME! IT'S THE "HYAKU SHIKI!" Daguza and Nasri both looked over.

The young man was wearing a navy-blue colored jumper and jeans as he kicked the container and glided through the docking gate. It was one of the civilians being held on board, and as Daguza recalled that his name was probably Takuya Irei, a middle-aged NCO growled "OI! DON'T JUST RUN IN HERE LIKE THIS!" as he followed in, causing Daguza to look over at where both of them were heading to. An unfamiliar mobile suit was moved inside at the large docking gate that was 20m long.

It was a streamlined human-shaped mobile suit that was colored grey. The unit was made in the streamlined Federation unit style, but it did not look as rigid as the “Jegan” or the “ReZELs”. The complicate and intricate design on the surface had a slenderness that was more like a human body. The machine had two binders that were upright, and it resembled an Archangel the way the wings were closed. What was more characteristic however was the head, as what looked like a visor on the eyes was installed on the face. It looked to be a dual-eye sensor, and made this mobile suit’s ‘face’ resemble a “Gundam”.

“That is?”

“I hear that it’s one of the prototype transformable units. They probably dragged it out from the bottom of the warehouse to make up numbers. I think it’s called “Delta Plus” or something…”

Nasri answered as he did not look at the mobile suit, but at Takuya who did not look like a soldier. “What’s with that?” He showed a stern expression as he answered, and Daguza let out a three-day worth of sigh.

“We got involved in a lot of things…”

Where should we begin? As Daguza was thinking about this, Daguza had already climbed up to the top of the “Delta Plus”, inspecting the visor that reached the ceiling and the cockpit. The NCO grabbed onto his leg, but was unable to look away from the shiny new machine. “What the heck? Who put this mobile suit with low interchangeability into this ship?” The NCO grumbled, “This is a dream machine. It’s one of the Hyaku-type machines in the Z testing projects. If the transformation is complete, it can be really somewhat powerful.” Takuya lectured, and the NCO frowned as he said, “Isn’t that Z project 10 years ago or something…” “TAKUYA!” A sharp voice rang throughout the deck.

“What are you doing there? We’re moving out once the movement is complete. Hurry up and get ready.”

The NCO too was shocked by this voice that was let out by Micott Bartsch. She was wearing light yellow parka and hot pants that would definitely not be seen on a military ship. Her nice long legs were exposed as she got over the container beside her and let her feet land on the deck, not waiting for Takuya, “Even if you tell me that, I have nothing to prepare!” as he reluctantly left the machine. As they passed by each other, Micott suddenly looked at Daguza near here.

She gasped in shock, and looked away. The stiff face showed a

gloomy expression, just like how it was when she 'leaked the information'. This act triggered quite the chemical reaction, causing Micott's friend to be on the brink of danger. *I don't know how she's handling this reality.* Daguza did not think too much into these as another voice interrupted, "Are you two ready?" He looked over at the source of this voice, and saw the petite figure of Ensign Mihiro Oiwakken, who was assigned to take care of the civilians, about to land on the deck.

As Mihiro looked over at Micott, she did not look at Daguza's and company, trying her best to look away from the ECOAS members in this precarious situation. She grabbed the rooted Micott on the shoulder and said, "Come on. You don't have to stay here any longer." as she left the scene. Daguza sighed as he saw them leave without turning back, and watched Takuya, who once glanced at him, leave. *That's fine. We're the ones guilty here—we, ECOAS, used the 'leaked information' to use a hostage and carried out a despicable battle. Just hate me as long as you don't blame youself…*

"Looks like you really got involved in a lot of things."

Nasri watched the trio leave as he said with an expression of different meaning. On hearing this voice Daguza shrugged at this man who understood ECOAS' standpoint very well.

Part 8[edit]

(To be honest, even I was shocked when your father contacted us. Nobody would specially check on a carrier unit pilot's background after all.)

Ted Cherenkov's said unabashedly from the other side of the communicator monitor. His 50-year-old face that was tanned by playing golf looked to be a standard sample for those affiliated to the Senate Council. There were all sorts of medals on his secondary uniform. *Some great person you are. It's right for you to be lazy to check after all.* Riddhe suppressed the voice within his heart as he answered with a cold voice, "Yes…"

(I did hear news that you were deployed to Londo Bell. But I didn't expect that you'll be assigned to the Nahel Argama. Your reassignment order will be sent over, so just get away from there. A prince of a senator shouldn't be involved in a secret mission.)

The Admiral said casually as if he wanted someone to return home due to bad weather. Riddhe however was not shocked by this line that was without consideration about the current situation. He already

expected it when he was called to this second communication room after the supply ship “Alaska” was docked with it. This was the reply he got when he sent the mail on behest of the captain before the battle against the Red Comet. His father exerted pressure to save the foolish and reckless prodigal son—not considering about his son’s feelings as he wanted to draw a clear line from this ‘family’. Riddhe had his own life, but his father did not care that his son had some things he would not give up when it came to Life.

It’s always like this. Dad always has a wide vision, always asking me to see the big picture, and yet won’t understand the world his own son sees. The one correct is always dad, and he’ll use power to override everything despite it being a mistake. Admiral Ted’s lips resembled that of Riddhe’s own father, causing him to give a stare at the monitor without backing off. *I have to fulfill a duty and responsibility as someone involved—* He recalled the words the girl said half a day ago as he spoke “Thank you for your kind intentions, but I’m still a pilot of the Nahel Argama.”

“This has nothing to do with whose son I am. Right now, the squad’s worn out due to continuous battles. As a Federation soldier, if I leave the ship like this…”

(We’ve sent reinforcements. Just swap over with them.)

Admiral Ted’s answer was completely listless as he completely lacked attention to this conversation…or rather, this admiral might not have thought of him as a person. He was just looking at the shadow behind his back—the authority of Senator Ronan Marcenas. Riddhe felt the emptiness of talking to a wall as he yelled, “WHY ONLY ME…!” but Admiral Ted remained unmoved as he said formally, (It’s not just you.)

(We’ll be taking back the civilians from “Industrial 7”, and the prisoner from Neo Zeon, of course.)

“Are you talking about… Mineva Zabi?”

(I’m talking about the prisoner. Don’t say that taboo name so easily.)

For once, Admiral Ted showed nervousness in his eyes as he said with a stiff voice. Mineva Zabi herself was not to be disclosed, and her existence was deemed ‘political’. The girl’s voice rang in Riddhe’s mind again, rendering him speechless. Admiral Ted coughed to create a short pause, and continued, (Anyway, these people will be sent to the Moon. You’ll follow them too.)

(There’re people from the Intelligence Department on the “Alaska”, so leave the prisoner to them. Don’t ask any further.)

“Then what about the civilians? They…”

(Will be treated as those who violated confidentiality and dealt as appropriate. You have no need to be involved with them)

Violated confidentiality. This unfamiliar term caused Riddhe’s heart to cool down. The mobile suit maniac Takuya and that mysteriously bewitching girl Micott could not be isolated from ‘politics’ any longer. *What will happen to them once they’re moved to the Moon?* Riddhe understood that the Nahel Argama’s directions and everything else was going just as Mineva descrived. He clenched his fists on his knees. Ted lowered his stare slightly and said somewhat awkwardly, (It’s because of your father that I’m talking to you like this.)

(You’re still young. Forget about everything you saw or heard there. From now on, this is the world of politics.)

Even if you’re the son of a political maestro, this thing isn’t at a level where a pilot can resist—the Admiral’s expression showed this. *That’s right.* Riddhe muttered. He knew, physiologically, that this mentality should not exist in his body that was no longer in the teens. *As someone who has to fulfill his duty and responsibility—I have to do something I can and what I must do.* He had determination that was about to take shape, and lifted his head as he said, “Please just tell me one thing.”

“Where will the Nahel Argama go after this?”

Hm. Ted sighed as he raised his loose chin.

Part 9[edit]

““Palau”, the civilian resource satellite that belonged to Side 6. The Intelligence Branch concluded that the RX-0 was transported here.”

Alberto smirked as he handed the monitor sheets to them, looking at their expressions. Otto Mitas gave a meaningful look as he pulled up the uniform cap that was worn below his stare, and took up one of the monitor sheets on the table.

The B4 sized monitor sheet that felt like film showed the exterior image of “Palau”. It was a middle-sized quarry satellite located on L1, and could be described as floating in the outer regions of the shoal space region. Another monitor sheet showed the colony association’s internal plans, while another one showed the actual internal construct from the observations—the locations of the military port, the number of ships docked there, the types, and even where the command post was—all described in 3D CG details. No matter what anyone thought, this was

not data that could be obtained within a mere two days.

“The conclusion sure came fast…”

Otto said these sarcastic words as he put the monitor sheet that had changed back to its original size back on the table. *You’re saying that this is the data obtained from optical observation tracking of the enemy ships? What a joke. The Senate Council definitely knew of this base the “Sleeves” have, for years even. The government already knew that Neo Zeon was recuperating in “Palau” ever since “Char’s Counterattack” ended 3 years ago. It’s already there, but politically, it’s just treated as a Zeon remnant base that they couldn’t see—and the reason why they can see it is because of a more powerful political force called the Laplace Box taking effect.*

“This is the results obtained from the military and the Intelligence Branch. This shows that they do feel this operation rather seriously.”

Alberto said while ignoring these snide remarks. *I really can’t tell whether this man understands that his actions already caused the RX-0 to be lost.* Otto was not the only one who thought this way as all the main cadres in the officers’ room were surrounding the long table as they thought this way, but the fat face of this commanding subordinate in a suit showed no signs of wavering. Everyone was giving looks of suspicion and hatred at Alberto, and the “impossible” line came from the chief operator, sparking a debate.

“You want to use the Nahel Argama, one ship, to take down a base? This requires a fleet to do so.”

“The ones leading the attack is ECOAS. As everyone knows, the reinforcements for this operation have arrived. It’s unprecedented for the ECOAS, who can take many on their own, to send 2 squads to fight together…”

“Where are the other ships? The Nahel Argama isn’t going to endure another battle like this.”

“Do we have a chance of winning? If we want to get back the RX-0, we can’t just suppress from the outside. It’s imperative that we do some mass destruction to prevent the enemy from attacking us.”

“We can only land and attack once the ship’s forces surround and fire. We only have 5 mobile suits, including the reinforcements. We need to go all out just to defend a ship, let alone support ECOAS.”

The well-experienced navigation officer finished, and everyone stared at the Captain who was sitting at a higher level. He emphasized his

tone, “Are you convinced, Captain?” causing Otto, who had his arms folded, to jerk.

“Things have already passed the extents the counter terrorist laws have. If we really want to attack the base, we need to gather everyone from Londo Bell. I think the Senate Council is just asking us to die in battle.”

“We haven’t even mourned for those died in battle…”

The eyes that were bloodshot with rage and fatigue were looking back at him with the uniform cap. Otto felt that it was reasonable for everyone’s attitude to be like this as he looked down and would not face any other stare. The Nahel Argama would be fighting alone in this operation to reclaim the RX-0. Otto had never heard of such an unreasonable order in his entire space military career. It was bad enough that they lacked fighting resources, and at this point, many of the ships they asked for were being used for training–just like how the Nahel Argama was a few days ago. The reason why the ships were not gathered was because the Senate Council was not willing to bring matters to the surface, and such political considerations had no relations to the worn out crew.

“Because of this, we invested a large sum of money training two squads of special forces.”

Alberto continued while maintaining his usual iron-wall like thick-skinned face, “We’ve already sent in as much manpower under this secret mission. Please don’t forget that this is the result of the backhand dealings our Anaheim Electronics here has done.”

“NO ONE’S ASKING YOU ANYTHING!?”

“IT’S BECAUSE OF YOU THAT THE RX-0 GOT TAKEN!”

The thoroughly incensed cadres all stared over at Alberto, and the subordinates behind him froze up. Alberto hesitated as he tried to speak up, “It’s because of me that this ship wasn’t ship…” But Otto immediately got off his seat to interrupt him.

Everyone, who had been looking at each other, turned their stare on Otto, causing the atmosphere in the room to tense up. Otto took the shocked and expectant stares, and lowered his cap below his sights and said “I’ll be back immediately.” before leaving.

He walked out of the officers’ room while bearing the awkward atmosphere that did not allow for any depressed emotions. “Is he going to complain to HQ?” “He’s going to the toilet, isn’t he?” The

cadres chattered, yet they sounded so shrill to Otto.

Part 10[edit]

Otto moved to the corridor of the gravity block, and took the elevator. There was still a while before the swap of duties happened, so not a lot of people who would use the elevator. He checked the time, closed the elevator doors, did not touch the operator panels, and merely took a deep breath through his nose and roared,

“DAMN IT!”

This roar that rose up from his abdomen rocked the inner walls of the elevator. The voice was so loud that anyone would feel that it could pass through the shaft leading to the bridge and seep out of the Nahel Argama, which was moving in the middle of space. Otto could not contain the smoldering bitterness within him, and could not feel relieved, so he continued to kick the wall with all he had and punch it. The blunt impact sounds rocked the elevator several times, stopping at the cramped box that had no openings.

What reinforcements? What secret operation? Those guys from the Senate Council never believed that this operation will succeed. They’re just pretending to do something to help create an excuse for their failures. The “Nahel Argama” and ECOAS are just being used to create alibis for them. We’re being used by the government as tools to show that they ‘did their best here.

It was too idealistic to say that everyone was being sent to their deaths here. The Box, and Mineva Zabi; this ship kept getting involved in troublesome situations, such that they might as well just sink it. If the crew survive…the captain would just be reassigned somewhere else, and the crew will be broken up through other means, scattered all over the place and live the rest of their lives while being observed. Even if they complain that they were being punished unjustly, nobody would listen to them. If Neo Zeon had the Box and attacks them furiously, things would change. But to the big shots, they would be very satisfied with an outcome that meets their expectations, and it was unlikely that they would think that far ahead. They would try to prevent an all-out conflict and maintain an economic standard that was based on military reinstatement. Londo Bell would head the other way while hunting down the remnants of Zeon, those on the other side would use a political adjustment ‘crisis’ to keep acting—

They could no longer hope for the assistance of Senator Marcenas. If they disobeyed and escaped, things would not change. Otto wanted to just break up from the Senate Council itself and surrender to Neo

Zeon, but he could not allow himself to do this as he was a captain who had many subordinates die under him. He continued to search his mind that was being cornered, and let his emotions explode in the elevator. At this moment, the elevator door opened, causing Otto to miss as his body tumbled outself.

The two figures stood outside the elevator, showing shocked expressions. Otto immediately grabbed onto the door and barely managed to avoid tumbling to the floor, but his heart felt despair again after seeing their faces. He hurriedly picked himself up, kept still, quickly tidied himself up, and coughed first to clear things up.

First Officer Liam and Commander Daguza blinked for just a moment as they stepped forward in unison, probably pretending not to see the captain's shameful act in order to save his dignity. *To be seen by these two of all people.* Otto cringed back as he felt his fingertips turn red. He tried to return back to the officers' room, but Liam called out 'captain', causing him to stop.

"I heard of the order from the Senate Council. What do you intend to do?"

Liam raised her thick eyelids as she stared at Otto, but it was a rare sight for Daguza to stand by both of them in common agreement, giving a usual machine-like poker face. Otto wondered what else they would think of as he answered with a low voice, "What else can we do?"

"An order's an order. We can only follow it. This has something to do with the Box that decides the Fate of the world after all."

Otto really wanted to leave the scene this time as he fully comprehended the irony he would be enacting, "I have no disagreements with this." but Daguza's voice caught up with Otto, causing him to stop.

"But we'll view this operation as a hostage rescue."

These unexpected words caused Otto to show an unexpected expression to Daguza behind him, "Hostage rescue…?" Otto repeated, and remembered the face of the boy who rode the "Gundam" and rushed out of the ship. Banagher Links shook of the pressure the adults bore on him and only cared about fighting it head on. Daguza showed an affirmative expression to Liam, and took one step closer to Otto.

"We still owe him one. We'll do what we can do. I remember this ship has a hyper-mega particle cannon, right?"

Liam stood beside the sincere looking Daguza, and nodded with a determined expression that was never seen before. Otto turned towards them completely, indicating that he was willing to listen to them.

Part 11[edit]

The Universal Century was about to reach the 100-year mark at this moment, but humanity still did not find a way to control gravity. The generation of centrifuge force within the inner walls of the large rotating domess was the maximum they could go with the current limits of technology. In this sense, humanity were creatures who had not progressed at all since the old century.

It was necessary to insert a rotating domes inside the satellite if they wanted to build a living environment in the mining satellite, and “Palau” was no exception to this. The inside of the asteroid had a domes 1.6km in diameter and 3km long buried inside, and the living space for civilians was built inside. Amongst the 4 connecting stone blocks, the largest of them was the triangular shaped asteroid Calyx, which had two living areas inside. No matter which world they were at, there was a difference in class. If there was an Uppertown with a Government House as center, the other living block would naturally be the Downtown where the miners were, and people were divided in these two areas based on their statuses. On a side note, the 3 blocks connected to the “Calyx” were called “Corolla”, each designated as A, B, C. It could be said that the 3 blocks that were connected were shaped like a flower.

There was no difference in the construct between the Uppertown and the Downtown, but “Palau” had its own unique characteristic. In other words, there was a cutter drill installed at the tip of the dome that could create a centrifuge force and dig into the asteroid’s bedrock. It would be apt to describe it as a large shield machine.

The residents of “Palau” built their homes in this very large cutter machine and built towns, forming their social quarters. When the men head out to excavate at the main shaft, the women would stay behind to choose the rocks that were dug or make homemade goods to pass the day. This would be said to be type of life where they do their jobs to the extreme—no, it should be more accurate to say that they were recreating the tough life of being a pioneer. When the Space Migration plan was started, the ones who were sent to work on this asteroid were mostly criminals, refugees or political criminals who opposed the government. They were not allowed to return back to Earth, and could only raise their children under such harsh conditions and end their

careers while covered in dust…

“Well, there seemed to be some pulmonary disease or social caste discrimination before, stuff that were really suited for proletariat education. But that’s during our grandfathers’ time. Right now, they’re schools, hospitals around, and even the latest information can be obtained. We’re free to head to other colonies too. Some are still poor but the rest aren’t any different from the other places either.”

Gilboa said carefully, but he did not forget to quip in at the end, “But discrimination itself hasn’t disappeared.” At this point, the shield machine was not working, and it was said that most of the men were working outside to support the expenses of their families. Banagher was brought to this Downtown residential block after he met Frontal, and simply stepped into this town called “Palau” that gave a certain carefree vibe. The place was 1.6km in diameter, and the length was half of an ordinary colony. The width was similar to the “Snail”, but this place was just like “Industrial 7” in that it was built such that the artificial sun would spin and let out sun rays, so it did not feel as packed as a miniature garden. The sky had brown clouds floating on it, and green pastures could be seen all over the winner wall. However, what felt mysterious was that one part of the airtight wall was covered with a rocky layer.

In any ordinary colony, the airtight walls located on both sides of the dome would generate dirt, creating a scene that they would call a ‘hill’, but this scene was different from them. The front end of this living block was the cutter drill that was inserted into the asteroid. This machine had not been used for many years, and became one with the ground. The 1.6km long cutter managed to drill into the rocky surface, and that scene was different from an ordinary colony. The shield machine created a sense of pressure that could not be removed, and the crudely made unit houses in the town helped to sight, creating the impression that the entire town was a worker dormitory.

The poor citizens managed to make ends meet by relying on the Neo Zeon army. Banagher recalled the overly glamorous constructs in the command post, and created the impression of dejected looking people in his heart. However, this was overturned the moment he reached his destination.

“Ah, it’s daddy!” “Daddy’s back!” Such excited voices could be heard once he opened the door, and Gilboa opened his arms wide as he greeted them “Oi, kiddos!” With the boy who was about 10 years old leading the pack, there were 4…no, 5 children, wearing tattered clothes that looked like they were going to be torn apart. These

children came running out from the shadows of the old furniture, looking like a pack of mice that were kept and bred. As Banagher gave a puzzled look, another voice rang, “Big Sis Marida’s here too!”, and a 6th girl came running out from under the table.

The children that were gathered around Gilboa then leapt towards Marida behind him, “Oi oi oi, you prefer her to daddy here? How depressing!” The children ignored Gilboa who remarked this wryly as they hugged Marida’s legs and started climbing up her. Marida herself kept the usual non-smiling expression on her face as she pulled aside a child clinging onto her and grabbed another on the ankle, making them upside down. Banagher felt that this was too violent, but to the children, this looked rather fun as a black little girl squealed “I want it too!” “Me too!” another child’s voice could be heard.

What exactly is going on here? The rising dust blurred Banagher’s vision, but he continued to stare inquisitively into this neat and tidy room. A lady then spoke up, “You’re back. Are you and Marida hurt?” causing him to blink. A black woman who looked to be in her late thirties showed her face from a rusted pillar. Gilboa raised his hand, causing the peaceful looking housewife to smile brightly as she stepped on the creaking floor and moved towards him. “Captain too.” That woman said as she looked over, and Banagher too looked back. Zinnerman was standing outside the door, looking rather shy as he raised his head.

Marida did not look at Banagher any further as she silently carried the children upside down. Banagher was more affected by how she showed a gentle expression for the first time rather than the abnormal arm strength. Zinnerman then turned around and said, “I’ll leave it to you then.” before leaving from the corridor. “Where’s this kid from?” the woman asked as she looked at Banagher, who heard Gilboa’s answer, “We have to take care of this kid for the time being because of some reasons.” Banagher inadvertently stepped on the floor and left the scene, and though his feet were slowed by the dust blown onto the ground, “Captain…Mr Zinnerman!” he called out to the back silhouette that was gradually moving away.

Zinnerman, who was dressed in a black military leather coat, stood in the middle of the roaring winds as he stopped. The blond man called Flaste too stopped, giving a somewhat menacing look at Banagher, but Banagher did not have the mind to care about him. He stood on the street that was surrounded by unit houses like Gilboa’s house on both sides, and faced Zinnerman’s black eyes.

“What’s going on? Bringing me to such a place…”

“We can’t find any other suitable places. As you see, they're kids in there, but there’s still enough space to let you live there…”

“That’s not what I’m saying…! Why am I not in a cell or something?”

“Do you feel that’s better?”

And just like the first time they met, he gave a stare of killing intent to Banagher, “This is just a makeshift, right?” Banagher showed his stumped expression to them and said.

“Are you saying that poverty and discrimination will breed terrorists? Even if you let me see this and make me one of your allies…”

A sharp and hot pain struck Banagher’s face, causing his sights to spin. *I got punched.* Banagher understood this as his body flew to the floor, and his face soon landed on the dusty ground.

“Don’t be mistaken.”

Zinnerman used his other hand to cup the fist that he rewarded Banagher with as he said with a deep voice. Banagher caught sight of that face in his blurred sights.

“Don’t think you’ll be forgiven for anything just because you’re a kid. Adults are more violent then what you know.”

These words struck Banagher’s sub-consciousness right on the mark as his numb and hurting face was burning with shame. He used his fingertips to wipe away with the blood on his lips, and wordlessly stared at the back of Zinnerman’s face.

“You just think you know, but you don’t know anything at all. Stay here and learn.”

Zinnerman left these words behind as he walked off again. He was not concerned about Flaste, who glanced back at Banagher once, and put his hands into his large coat pockets and left gradually. Banagher spat out the sand that was mixed with blood in his mouth, and finally managed to straighten his swaying knees. *He tells me to learn here, but what?* He mused in his heart and used his hand to touch the heat on his face. At this moment, a voice came from behind, “I was told this before.”

Marida suddenly appeared, dressed in the crimson red uniform as she stood behind Banagher. Her eyes looked past him, staring at Zinnerman who was about to disappear at the alleys. Banagher saw Marida’s somewhat depressed looking eyes and wondered, *What kind of relationship to they have…* Banagher thought of the guess he had

before, only to cringe as he heard the voices “Bye bye!” “See you!”. 3 children came running out from Gilboa’s house and ran towards the front yard that was so small in space that even an electric car could not stop there.

Banagher looked back at them, and found that the trio’s skin colors were different. He realized that they seemed to be children who came from nearby to play, and a girl with her hair tied said, “Will you be here tomorrow, Big Sis Marida?” Banagher looked over at her, who answered, ”Yeah, I’ll be here.” She answered, and the girl’s face immediately showed absolutely delight as she looked at the children around her with a shy expression. “Then, see you tomorrow.” “Bye bye.” The children left their energetic voices behind as they ran through the alleys like a gust of wind.

Marida gently raised her hand as she watched them leave, and once the children vanished, she looked at Banagher with a cold expression. “Go in. The nights in “Palau” end early.” She quickly finished, and left Banagher aside as she went straight back to Gilboa’s house. He stared at her long hair that swayed with the wind, looked back at the artificial sun that was definitely turning dark, and finally looked at the street that was about to be buried in sand. Banagher felt like he could immediately escape from here…but he did not know how to head to the port, and did not feel that he could snatch the “Unicorn” back easily. Marida and everyone else could walk about in their uniforms, and this showed that this was a land where all the residents here followed Neo Zeon. No matter where he ran, things would not change, and he would be brought back here in the end.

So, I’m still being restrained? Banagher sighed slightly as he looked up at the ‘hill’ from past several low-rise houses. The long and large cutter of the shield machine extended right into the tip, making the ‘hill’ look like it was a material supporting the airtight wall from the inside. The ‘hill’ had gust of dusts blowing all over it, different from the colonies Banagher had been seeing, let alone a tree. However, he could only look up and this rocky layer that was completely bare. There was a brown dust-colored mist floating near the axis that could not interfere with the center of axis, giving a mysterious presence that could not be approached.

There’s no universe over there, just a thick layer of compressed rock gathered after millions of years. Banagher thought as he felt that the chances of him escaping was getting slimmer and slimmer, and stopped looking at the ‘hill’. Out of options, he intended to head back to Gilboa’s house, only to notice a stare coming from the alley. It was the girl with tied hair who greeted Marida before, staring at Banagher with

wide black eyes.

His eyes met hers, and she bared her teeth that had missing incisors as she made a face before running off. *The citizens here are all soldiers…is it?* Banagher rubbed his face that was punched and walked back to the corridor.

Part 12[edit]

Despite reducing 3 people from 6, there was still 3 of them. The 3 children, the Gilboa couple, Banagher and Marida made it so packed that they had to watch out from each other when they move in such a narrow place. There might not be a need to think about this too much when the children were running around, but they had to be carefully when they pull their chairs or do something else.

Some, like Gilboa, had their rooms in “Palau”, but most of the crew, including Flaste, stayed in the dormitory at the port, and it was said that Zinnerman would not leave the “Garencieres” even when docked. It seemed that Marida lived at Gilboa’s house, and there was a bed for her at the children’s room on the second floor. However, according to the mother, Marida would not spent more than 5 days living there during a month.

“I was requested by the Captain there. That man’s in his fifties, and the rest are mostly singles, so he can’t just leave a girl like Marida to them. She’s been living here for almost 2 years. I do feel that she can live on her own, but the kids keep sticking to her. It doesn’t matter if I do so in the first place.”

Gilboa’s wife said this as she prepared dinner without anyone asking her. *What does it mean when she says that Marida can’t be alone? Is Marida a prisoner here too? Stay here and learn. I was told this before* —the words Banagher heard before suddenly bore weight, causing Banagher to glance secretly and Marida who was accompanying the children, but he did not want to ask her. *There’s no need to know. She’s different from me.* He told his mind that may relax at any time, and silently went through a frustrating moment.

It was finally time for dinner, and the dining table, which took up most of the living space, was laid out with 7 persons’ share. It consisted of sautéed rabbit, soup, bread, and a potato salad that was piled up like a hill. The rabbits were reared in “Palau”, and they seemed to be the main source of protein for the residents. Ignoring the contents of the dishes alone, the sight of the dinner table in front of Banagher could be said to be majestic. He, who grew up with only his mother, did not know anything about his relatives, and never experienced seeing 7

people's faces at the dining table. Banagher did go to a buffet restaurant when he was studying at AEIC, but never once had he experienced a mood where everyone sat close to each other and ate

The sense that was seemingly unfamiliar and never used before was activated. Banagher's appetite got the better of all other unspeakable feelings within him as he reached for the bread once Gilboa got to the table. At this moment, everyone put their elbows on the table, cupped their hands, and a moment of silence descended upon the dining room.

"Lord, thank you for the meal today."

Gilboa said silently, and his wife and children said "Amen". As Banagher followed them by cupping his hands, the children had already started tucking in. Marida too split her hands casually and took her fork and spoon. Banagher did see this in a move before, but he never expected a family to really pray before handing a meal. He blinked, and reached for the bread again. The extremely hard feeling made him wonder uneasily whether he could eat it.

A gust blew by the streets, causing the windows to rattle, and the pendant light that was weak swayed. If no one adjusted the artificial flow stronger, the sand would probably accumulate on each other. Each dish had a heavy taste, maybe because it was due to their lifestyle that required more manual labor. Banagher silently put the food into his mouth, and suddenly looked at the window that continued to ring.

How many of these families are hearing such winds while gathered around the dinner table quickly—and amongst them, there will be people who will be mourning for those who will never come back and those who will never hear anything. Banagher's mind, which was relaxed because of the food, had these thoughts, and he felt his hand holding the spoon was giving off sweating. He wiped of the sweat that started appearing on his forehead profusely and tried to gather his concentration on the food. "Are you from the Federation, Big Brother?" One of the children asked as Banagher put the spoonful of soup into his mouth, unable to taste anything at that moment.

The one who spoke was the oldest boy amongst the trio. He continued to give an inquisitive look to Banagher despite Gilboa glaring at him, telling him to eat quietly. As his younger brother and sister lifted their faces to give quizzing looks at him, Banagher glanced at Marida, who continued to move her hands as she had no intent of stopping her meal. He suddenly felt enraged by some unknown thing inside him, pour the tasteless soup into his mouth, "Yeah, that's right." and said in

a straightforward manner.

“I was dragged over by the people here forcefully.”

Banagher sensed that Gilboa stopped what he was doing, and that his wife was looking over at Banagher, but he had no intent of caring, “Are you a prisoner?” The boy asked, and Banagher answered with a depressed voice, “Maybe.”

“If that’s the case, it’s great that you’re our prisoner. You won’t get food to eat if you’re a prisoner of the Federation. You’ll even get interrogated.”

“Tikva, don’t talk as you eat.” His mother said. Logic told Banagher not to be bothered by him, but it was wasted, “The Federation won’t do that.” Banagher said.

“They will. Daddy told us before that he was a prisoner during the One Year War, and the captain saved him from his detainment.”

This boy called Tikva stared at his father who should be a one and only hero as he continued. Banagher glanced secretly at Gilboa’s weakly chiding expression as he did not intend to continue. Banagher said, “…Maybe such things happened.” as he reached for the bread.

“A lot of people had their families and friends killed by Zeon too.”

The Gilboa couple stopped again, and the children showed expressions of shock as they looked up. However, Marida did not show a sign of concern on her face as she continued to eat. Banagher stuffed the bread into his mouth. There was no taste. It felt like chewing on sand, and the sour saliva spread in his mind. “It’s the same for both. We’re fighting a war here.” Tikva said as his expression did not show that he was having a meal.

“Zeon’s fighting for the independence of Spacenoids. Big Brother, you’re a Spacenoid right? Why are you standing on the Federation’s side?”

“Tikva, control yourself, or daddy’s going to get angry.”

Gilboa growled, but Tikva’s widened eyes remained unmoved. Banagher swallowed the sponge-like bread and answered him, “Since where is there a just war?”

“Even if anyone says that it’s right, the fact that Zeon destroyed colonies and killed a large number of people will never change. Those who’re killed won’t even have the time to think if it were correct or not. Without knowing, one of these days, they’re just…this isn’t logical.”

That's right, this isn't logical. Zeon's an anomaly. Neo Zeon that destroyed "Industrial 7" is an abnormal terrorist organizations. I naturally have the right to defend myself unconditionally when I face such people who want to take my life like that. I just had the right to do this. That's not killing. I'm not a killer—

Tikva showed a crying look to Gilboa, who glared at Banagher once, but did not say anything as he put the soup into his mouth. *See, you can't say anything else, right?* He grumbled in his heart, only to hear the sound of a chair being moved, causing him to jump up unwittingly.

It was Marida. Banagher thought that she was just getting up from her seat silently, but she left the table, got behind Banagher, grab his jumper collar with a hand, and was dragged out of his own chair without warning.

As Gilboa and the rest stared at this scene in a surprised manner, Marida dragged Banagher to the door with a force that did not allow for any refusal. "What are you doing…?" Banagher groaned as he spent lots of effort trying not to fall as he was dragged out like a leashed dog, and soon, he was brought out of the corridor.

"Wait, Marida…!" The mother said this as she raised her hand to stop her, and her eyes that once glanced at Gilboa looked at the door again. Marida did not look back as she did not open her sealed lips. Finally, Banagher merely saw the faces of the children with widened eyes as the beckoning darkness of the night closed in on his body and surrounded him. The howling of dogs somewhere was covered by the gusts that blew by.

Part 13[edit]

Both of them passed through the alleys just like this as they headed of the 'hill'. It was just past 7pm, but the town was in complete silence. The night streets were sparsely covered with street lights, and even the sound of an electric care moving by could not be heard. Only the sounds of utensils clanking and the television sets echoing from every household could be heard softly. The stray cats that had ominous glowing eyes in the shadows crossed the alleys. It was unknown whether those with their lights turned off were already asleep, or that nobody had been living there.

Night in "Palau" certainly came early. *Let go of me. I know. I'll walk on my own.* Banagher, who repeated this many times before he was finally released from Marida's grasp was being prompted by something as he walked in the darkness. *If she wants to kill me, she should have just done so right away. There's no need for her to bright me to a place*

devoid of people just to finish me off. Maybe she's going to bring me to a prison in the suburbs, just as I want. Banagher had somewhat defeatist thoughts as he continued to walk on the sandy ground faster than what was required. Marida did not speak up in the end, and the silent duo just continued down the dim alley just like this.

The town disappeared right behind them, and a wide quarry appeared right in front of them. The rock strata that was grinded by the cutter of the shield machine was chosen at this quarry. Those with minerals would be sent to the factory, while the rock remains would be sent to an airlock outlet with a belt conveyor that sent the rocks to wherever they needed to go. The shield machine cutter had not being used for a long time, and the quarry was littered with rocks and dirt that was dug but not processed, forming a sloped surface with a steep mountain. Marida went near the warning lights, proceeded on, and guided Banagher to a cave that looked like it was drilled through right in the middle of the sloped surface.

Unlike the central excavation connection shafts, this was a cave that was not strengthened with anything like concrete. The realism of the term prison suddenly closed in on Banagher, causing him to look up at the night sky before he reached the cave. The sandy clouds had not dispersed even during the night, and the lights of the stars, and the town lights that were flickering on the other end, could not be seen. Banagher's legs felt fearful as he was unable to move, but he was glared at by Marida, who entered the cave first, and thought that he did not want to be looked down on. He swallowed his saliva and stepped into the cave. It seemed that there was a power source inside as Marida touched the control panel near the entrance, causing the lights inside to light the tunnel.

The icy cold air surrounded Banagher's body, and the sound of the wind blowing by gradually faded. The tunnel showed a gradually downhill path for 20m, and after that, there was a hole that was broken through. Banagher was overwhelmed by the ceiling that was suddenly raised, stumbled a few times as he saw the sight in front of him, and gasped.

The stone pillars that were carved out were spaced out in a certain distance equally, and the ceiling supported by these pillars was in an arch shape. Under the ceiling were two rows of chairs that were rotting and tattered. The 2 rows of 10 chairs were lined up until the end of the cave. The inside of this hollow was even taller, and there were an altar that was almost rotting and a faded red carpet that was covered in dust. There was a podium at the right of the altar for preaching sermons, and on the other side, there was a pedestal used to receive

the Holy Spirit. Entrenched deep into the wall on the other end of the hollow was a male figure who was crucified onto the wall—

The things in front were not exceptionally rare. There would be at least one church no matter which colony it was. Children knew that this person called Christ was the origin of Christmas day. Despite it not being as widespread as the old ages, the number of believers could not be described as few. Even non-believers would normally held weddings or funerals in a church. Banagher remembered that a pastor once recited a line from the Bible when his mother's funeral was taking place.

But over here, this was not an orthodox church. The altar, the Holy water font, everything was obviously made from hand. The stained glass on the walls had lights shining in, and there was work done deep within the cave as it was possible to shine on the figure of the Cross. The fluorescent lights that mimicked the Eucharist Lights were most likely an antique of the old ages. The candle altar and the figure of the Virgin Mary were placed on both the left and right sides of the altar, and it was probably brought over from Earth a long, long time ago.

Those things were the remnants of the old ages…the Gregorian calendar that was also called the age of God. This was a fortress made by the toil, wear and damage on their bodies, the real believers who were stained with blood and tears—Banagher unwittingly walked towards the altar and stared at the silent figure of Christ. Marida quietly approached him and suddenly spoke, "What you said wasn't wrong."

"There's no just war. However, being just alone may not necessary save people."

Marida ignored Banagher, who was staring at her blankly, and looked up at the Cross. Her gloomy navy-blue eyes showed the light of the stained glass at this moment, glowing in a transparent manner.

“This statue was built when this place was still part of the Asteroid Belt. The first batch of space pioneers were those who could not live on Earth, political criminals and people who had no other ways to live. When the Universal Century started, it was said that the Prime Minister said that this was a moment where Humanity would have to say goodbye to the century of Gods, but to these space pioneers, they would need a light they could rely on, especially those who lived in the asteroid belts, where the sunlight was mixed amongst the stars…”

The clear voice rang throughout the chapel, gradually seeping into Banagher’s tense body. He remembered the praying faces of Gilboa and the rest before they had dinner, and tried to say, “Light, is it…” Even though this “Palau” was dragged to be part of the Earth Celestial Sphere, the Church had built up in other places. The ideals of the people who saw light here 100 years ago had not disappeared even till this point. This belief would probably sink in with Gilboa and his descendants from the moment this was ingrained into the asteroid belt. They believed that one of these days, all suffering would pay off—

“Without light, people will be unable to live on. That’s why people want to rely on such a thing. However, the people who were abandoned into space finally found a light to replace this man. They found the new light called Zeon.”

Marida’s expression became a little sinister. Banagher again looked back at the image of Christ, and overlapped the image of Zeon Deikun he saw on the textbook over there.

“Whether it’s right or not isn’t important. To them, this light is important. They needed something to fight despair and live in this world that was cruel and binding. They needed something to believe that this world still has room for change. No one can laugh at such a demand. It’s stupid not to have a physical thing to rely on and live until now—if anyone can say that, that person is either being very happy, or is living in a way where he has nothing to do with the world. That can’t be called real living.”

Marida clenched her fists tightly as she said this. *This person is letting me see her heart, telling me that if she doesn’t do this, she won’t be able to tell me something important.* Such an understanding melted Banagher’s stiffness, and he felt his wavering heart calm down as he muttered, “Only humans have Gods…” This caused Marida to show an unexpected look as she turned towards him.

“Someone once said this. he said that humans have the power to overcome the current reality…the inner God called Possibilities.”

The words in his memories and the tapestry of the Unicorn were woven together like this, entering the bottom of Banagher’s heart. It was not a nightmare, but a voice let out by a definite existence, the one called his father, the words left in his heart—after a short moment of silence, Marida simply said this, “He’s really romantic.”

“It’s impossible for someone to say that without believing in Humanity or the world. I don’t know who said that, but he should be a kind person.”

Banagher was taken aback by Marida’s smiling face, and felt rather happy too. An embarrassed and proud complicated feeling rose up his chest, and he looked up at the image of Christ on the Cross.

Light. The inner God. Something that could be changed into possibilities or hope. Such a thing definitely existed in everyone, and yet varied amongst everyone. That was why everyone would agree with each other sometimes, and fight each other sometimes. If everyone was being wary about what they have different views on,

they would restrain their laws and definition of justice, solidifying into an absolute existence and make their way of lives rigid, making mistakes.

At that moment, humans killed Gods. They killed off possibilities and set laws to the world, confining themselves into this fixed viewpoint. They casted aside weights like ethics and morals, and what often kept swaying may be their values. If not, Banagher would not spend time with Marida, who he deemed a “terrorist”, and they would not show their inner hearts to each other. Such insistence was foolish, and in a certain sense, regrettable…

Stay here and learn. Zinnerman’s words echo in Banagher’s mind, causing him to look down onto the sandy floor, and a sigh came out from his heating mind. “Don’t mind about Ensign Sergi…that guy you shot down.” Marida said as she gently went by Banagher’s shoulder.

“Once you pilot a mobile suit into battle, you’re a fighting unit called a pilot. You have no grudges if you’re killed, and there’s no need to feel guilty about killing people.”

Marida’s words let Banagher know the significance behind his obstinate actions, and the thoughts that were hidden in his tight heart; they were already seen through. He inadvertently looked up and stared at Marida’s face. These were what she wanted to say, and what she experienced and understood. These two factors overlapped within her navy blue eyes, forming an instinct that had yet become a physical form. Banagher’s chest felt an icy chill, and he cautiously asked, “Have you piloted a mobile suit before?”

Marida glanced at Banagher silently, and immediately looked away as she simply answered, “I will when there’s not enough manpower.” This vague sounding answer might make anyone feel a chill, but after a short pause, Banagher thought of an uncertain possibility, and he could only stare at the navy blue eyes that were radiating light.

The light shining in diagonally from the stained glassed caused the side of her face looking at the Cross to look like the Virgin. *Such a beautiful person.* This recognition that only appeared in Banagher’s mind at this moment warmed his originally chilly body.

Chapter 2[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The “Unicorn”s body that was fastened in the spare hangar was an

industrial product whose elegance was said to be distilled, and could be described as an art piece. On one hand, it preserved the strokes and the flat surface of a mass product silhouette, while on the other hand, there armor itself was enhanced through a complicated procedure. The lone horn extending out from the forehead showed a remarkable presence of an art piece, and the mysterious appearance which matched the name was granted on the standing giant.

“This high mobility state…or the Gundam mode, I should call it? When that is activated, a system called the NT-D acts as the OS. As for the Laplace Program, you can imagine it to be activated with the NT-D, and it will reveal some encrypted data in phases.”

The 40-year-old technical officer said as he poked his head out of the abdomen. *Why can’t those who’re so called proficient in technical data talk appropriately to each person’s status?* Angelo felt unhappy inside as he reached for the raised platform and peered through the dim and opened cockpit hatch.

As the backup power was the only thing activated, the all-view monitor was not activated as it remained in the darkness that felt like it was about to converge everything. The display board on the linear seat let out a light indicating standby, flickering a logo that could be read as “La+”. Ever since it fell into Neo Zeon’s hands, the “Unicorn” kept refusing all external interference and remained silent, and this was the only sign it had been showing. La+—most likely, it was a light indicating the coordinates of the Laplace Box. Angelo felt a chill up his spine, and behind him, Full Frontal spoke, “In phases, you say?”

“In other words, the seal will be undone every time the NT-D is activated, and will show new information. This was activated twice from the pilot was registered. The first time was to let the system get into a standby phase, while the second showed these coordinates, and that’s all. Maybe it’ll show new information the next time it’s activated, and to be honest, I don’t know for sure. However, it’s more natural to assume that there’s still unrevealed information from the percentage of space the Laplace Program occupies the hard disk.”

“You can’t release all the information during this current phase?”

Frontal quipped. The tall masked figure standing on the raised platform stroked his chin, seemingly showing off alone in this unpleasant maintenance factory. The technical officer did not seem to have slept much after 2 days of nonstop work as he investigated the “Unicorn”, and answered, “We can try.” and weakly dropped his shoulders.

“It already took this much time for us to extract the information that was

given. If we randomly try to interfere with it, we might end up causing all the data to be erased. I'll try if you're willing to do this, but I won't recommend this. it'll be advisable to let it reveal itself according to the process."

"Can't you remove the pilot's biological register?"

If we can do that, we can extract the information immediately, and there'll be no need to control that boy called Banagher. The technical officer glanced aside at Angelo who interrupted with an anxious voice, and continued to tidy up the large number of cables floating around as he turned his back and answered, "There'll be a risk too."

"The pilot recognition system is linked to the Laplace Program. When a registered pilot activates the NT-D, the Laplace Program will be able to operate in the next phase. In this sense, we can say that this process is sort of a stepping stone. That's because a special wave is needed to be detected before the NT-D can be activated."

"So that's why it's called the Newtype-Drive system, is it?"

The technical officer gave a meaningfulness opinion, and Frontal gave a response that seemed to indicate that he understood something. *So we can only rely on Banagher Links?* Angelo only managed to understand this and lost all interest in this entire incident as he took a step back from the "Unicorn"s cockpit. The technical officer however continued "Yeah. But even so, its design is still rather amazing." Angelo basically ignored half of his words as he looked over at the wide maintenance factory.

The maintenance factory was located amongst "Palau", formed by 4 asteroids. The largest block was called "Calyx". At this place, the "Unicorn" and more than 20 mobile suits could be seen lined up and undergoing repairs and checks. There was a large thick green mobile suit "Geara Zulu" standing 2 hangars away from this point. Beside it was a "Geara Doga" that was part of the Geara models, and the machine that had the sleeve emblem on it had its maintenance hatches opened. The long machine standing right in front of it was the "Gaza"-type that was the main fighting force of Neo Zeon in the past. It was a simple mass-production model that was 10 years old, developed from the remnants of the Old republic, but the machines with a transformable frame was not a poor choice in use, and even at this point, it could be used for scouting or investigations. The Sleeve design that was newly imprinted on it showed ingenuity in that they would not realize their weaknesses by using numbers. In this sense, this feeling described the machines fittingly, and it also brought about a sense of unity despite it being a unit of the "Sleeves".

He looked up at the top, and saw the lights of the ships parked above the glass window at the ceiling. The silhouette that looked to be only the size of a thumb from this point was probably a patrolling “Musaka”-class ship. The military port of “Palau” was designated at the gap formed where the 4 asteroids were linked together, under the mortar-shaped depressions facing each other. The gaps were all covered by the asteroids facing outside, and it was impossible to see the military port from the outside. They could see the lights of the port from some angles, but it was hard to observe from the outside because of the asteroids linked together, giving a net function. Even though, it was not as concealed as a sturdy fortress. If the fissure at this point could be described as an anchorage, the light would be 5km away from this point on the “Calyx” in diameter, while the deepest part would be about 2km away. The fissure itself was protruding at the tip like an umbrella, and the beauty of the scene observed from below could only be described as majestic. If the connecting shafts could be described as stone pillars, this would be a stalactite cave in space.

Amidst, this large hole, there were 30+ ships docked, and the workboats and mobile suits looked like toys as they were floating through the dock. The randomly assembled remnant organization could be seen basically as a patrol squad, and though there were ships that could not be used as fighting strength, they could assemble enough personnel if they wanted to. *If we can unravel this thing called the Laplace system or something and get hold of the “Box”, it’s not impossible for us to wipe out the enemies at one go. But even so* Angelo gritted his teeth as he looked up at the head of the “Unicorn”. “I see, we might have to call it a drive, but its nature is a little intense.” Frontal’s tone caused him to hurriedly look forward.

“Yes. Leaving aside what the people who installed this Laplace Program were thinking, this thing itself is a hunting machine. It can be said that these two kinds of paradoxes were combined together. Captain, the ‘madness’ you said you felt from it might come from this.”

“I understand. Cardeas Vist sure left the Laplace Box to an unbelievable monster to tend to.”

Frontal’s lips under the mask curled as he heard the technical officer’s conclusion. *I missed something important.* Angelo did not even have the time to waver as Frontal called him “Lieutenant Angelo”, causing him to get into a still position.

“As what I commanded before, notifying the entire army and follow the instructions.”

“Yes!”

At this moment, Angelo instinctively stamped, and then reflected on what he heard. The given instructions were the response to the predicted attack. The Federation would come over to “Palau” to battle. He felt his blood boiling, but also realistically remembered that he had to bring over the freeze-dried rose. He stared at the back of the crimson red figure in front of him. Frontal put his hand on the cockpit hand and asked the technical officer, “So where’re the current coordinates pointing to?”

Angelo did not hear the reply of the technical officer who slipped into the cockpit. *That might be the coordinate data of the “Box”, so there’s no need for me to hear it.* Angelo intended to peek in through the cockpit, only to be taken aback by Frontal’s retreating figure, and could only make a way.

“…I really hope that’s a joke.”

Frontal faced the glow of the blinking “La+” and smiled as he said. At this, Angelo could only frown.

Part 2[edit]

At the same moment, April 12th, 00.25, the supply ship “Alaska” finished the resupply to the Nahel Argama and left the shoal space region as it returned back to the Moon.

The “Alaska” was a support ship under the Columbus class, 145m in length and 110m wide. Its shape could be described as completely rectangular, and though its length was not even two-thirds of the escort Clop-class ships, the ship space it occupied could take up two container block, and its capacity could be said to be sufficient enough to hold a mobile suit squadron. The ship finished its mission, and once passed through a peaceful time as it was commanded to head back under the jurisdiction of the normal Naval Bureau, but at this point, the situation it was involved in was definitely not peaceful.

There were other Clop-classes ships that were escorting it from the moon, and on the way back, the Irish-class sent over from Side 2 joined them. Two Jegan mobile suits were escorting it from the front and back on standby, flickering warning lights. It was expected that there would be escorts when supplying, but this formation was more cautious than even during a battle, and it was a special exception to see more defenses on the way back than it was going forth. The fleet command did not explain much about this, so the crew of the “Alaska” could only feel puzzled by it. However, there were some amongst the cadres who detected that something was up. The fleet command that stated that they found it troublesome to send reinforcements would not

just send in escorts on the whim. The issue here was the ‘baggage’ they received from the “Nahel Argama”.

The list of the ‘baggage’ included a pilot who was ordered to return back from the ship and two civilians said to be detained from “Industrial 7”. There was also a prisoner said to be involved with the “Sleeves”, but this person was accompanied with people from the Central Intelligence Branch, and her name and details were not revealed to the “Alaska”s crew at all. Most likely, the issue was regarding ‘her’—*the prisoner in this incident was a girl*, this eyewitness report was spread throughout the ship through the crew. The excessive number of guards was definitely drafted in to escort ‘her’. This moving of the prisoner was the main mission of the “Alaska”, more important than the resupply to the “Nahel Argama”. This was the truth.

Speaking of which, even if they knew of about this, things would not change. If the Intelligence Branch was involved, it would be suicidal to pursue things. The crew would just treat the rumors as such, and it would be fine if they did not reveal their true thoughts until the end of the mission. Even the Captain, who was sitting on his seat at the center of the bridge as he watched the “Nahel Argama” drift far away, had this thought too. The white ship frame shown on the main monitor lost its entire portside catapult deck, and even the ventral fin at the tail was collapsed. It looked like they needed to be repaired in a factory, but the Senate Council ordered them to carry on their mission, and would not even allow them to send back the injured. This was a secret mission being carried out, but the only thing one could assume from this was that they wanted the entire crew to die together.

“I don’t know what kind of thing they got, but that ship sure drew the worst straw there…”

The Captain, who had a military career of 28 years, and was still working as an honest supply ship captain while most of his graduated peers from military cadet academy had all become outstanding, had no other feelings about it. This was not something he should be involved in. Anyone in an organization, whether it was the military, would often have danger around, and he had to face caves he could not avoid. *I just have to hurry back to the Moon and drop the troublesome ‘baggage’. As the Captain thought about this, he turned his eyes to the screen, and the alarm rang, ripping through the stable air flowing within the “Alaska”.*

“We got a fire alarm coming from the 4th deck! Investigating it immediately.”

“The incident happened in the second living quarters. The area is filled

with smoke."

The operator immediately shut off the alarm and reported. "What did you say?" The Captain felt his moaning face stiffening as he turned his body to the console on the side of the bridge. The multi-screen monitor that showed the situation inside the bridge was covered in white smoke. The damage control board indicated the location of the report —

"Isn't that the block where the prisoners are held…?"

The second living quarters located inside the ship's gravity block was indicated on the damage board of the "Alaska"s cross-sectional view, and that flickering light was definitely there without a doubt. The Captain yelled out before he even thought about the significance, "ACTIVATE THE EMERGENCY STEERING TEAM!"

"PUT OUT THE FIRE. EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM, GO ENSURE THE PRISONER'S SAFETY…!"

"A new fire's reported! In the first container deck."

A second red alarm followed the voice of the operator, flickering in a corner of container block. A fire was detected there after there was a fire detected at the prisoner block. The Captain was not suspecting whether it was a bogus report or a coincidence anymore as he remained stunned for a while. "What's going on…?" He inadvertently mused, but no one answered as the words of the reports and the term emptiness overlapped each other as they went by his mind.

Part 3[edit]

The dome-shaped block that was rotating with the weak gravity generated within the walls required an airlock facility for artificial flow. Under zero gravity, where temperature difference did not exist, the air would not be able to flow easily, and this caused the danger of a vacuum belt in the ship.

The smoke that was created within the gravity block relied on this theory, and it flowed through the ship since the artificial airflow could not be stopped easily, causing the white mist to spread through the entire block. They could have sealed off the partition walls once they evacuated successfully, but the crew, who were all ordinary people, was not agile enough, and 1 minute was already wasted on teaching them the basics countermeasures. The only people who could pull out the Oxygen Breathing Apparatus after detecting this anomaly were most likely the Central Intelligence people who were in charge of watching the prisoner.

The 2 civilians that were also kept within the “Nahel Argama” were left to the crew of the “Alaska” for keeping. The 4 Intelligence Branch officers who were sent over to move the prisoner had already started moving. Two of them were standing in front of the prisoner detention room, while two others went to check on the situation. They did not feel that the enemy’s special agents would be able to sneak into the ship, but it was hard to imagine so many fire outbreaks happening at the same time being a coincidence. Two Intelligence Officers were dressed in suits and OBA masks as they kept their wary stares looking down the smoke-filled passages, pulling out their G-17 recoilless automatic pistols. All countermeasures were allowed, with the priority being that their prisoner was to be kept safe. Their guns were pointed at the floor, but their hands were holding onto the safeties of the G-17, and their expressions were already those of a soldier in battle.

At this moment, the smoke got thicker and thicker, making it harder to ensure their vision. If this was a fire that was deliberately started, the only reason they could think of would be misdirection. *We can’t let the prisoner move around so easily, but it would be too late for us to evacuate.* The two Intelligence personnel thought, and a person wearing an officer normal suit appeared on the other side of the smoke. He ignored the duo with their handguns raised as he yelled to them while running, “YOU GUYS, IT’S NOT ENOUGH TO WEAR OBAs!” and handed them three normal suits under his armpits.

“Hurry up and put those on. Those inside too.”

That person did not wait for their responses as he reached his hand to the detention door with an electric door. The Intelligence Officers quickly stopped him and said, “We’ll do this.” as they stared at this crew member who seemed to be from the emergency response. The emergency response crew member had the guns pointed at him, but he, who had his helmet pulled down, did not show signs of fear as he roared to the Intelligence Officers with killing intent, “HURRY UP THEN!”

“I’m in charge of fire prevention in this area! It’ll be on me if anyone dies here! Don’t just point that thing around here! Hurry!”

The Intelligence Officers exchanged glances and started putting their feet into their normal suits. One of them continued to remain on watch, while the other put on the helmet nimbly and pulled down the visor. After changing for less than 30 seconds, both of them entered a password only they knew and opened the electronic lock. One of them remained at the door to cover, while the other walked into the detention room.

At this moment, the emergency response member standing beside took action as he touched the Intelligence officer walking into the room by the neck. He pressed the emergency button on the seam of the helmet located at the back of the life support system, causing a status light to flicker. The Intelligence Officer noticed this anomaly and intended to activate the device again, only for the helmet to be filled with a transparent gas.

It was an anesthetic gas used to reduce oxygen consumption to the minimum when floating in space. Of course, this function would not be activated so easily, and it would require many countless procedures before it would be used normally. However, this normal suit that was tinkered with before would release the gas with the press of a button. The Intelligence Officer was knocked out in 2, 3 seconds, and the other person who noticed this anomaly walked into the room. The emergency crew member however responded before the gun was even pointed at him as he slammed the Intelligence Officer, and reached his hand towards the neck of the opponent who rolled onto the floor.

“You bastard…!” The Intelligence Officer groaned as his face relaxed and his body slumped. The emergency crew member pushed aside the sleeping Officer and tried to get up, staring right into the prisoner’s eyes as she stood in a corner of the detention room, dumbfounded. He poked his head outside to check that there was no one else around, and pulled aside his helmet visor.

“Ensign…Riddhe?”

The widened emerald eyes stared at the face deep within the visor. “Put this on.” Riddhe Marcenas simply briefed as he handed over the normal suit be brought along to her.

“We’re getting out of here. Pull down the visor and follow me.”

The prisoner—Mineva Lao Zabi did not say anything unnecessary. Her stared stopped on Riddhe, who was giving a serious look in his eyes, and received the Officer-use normal suit. She heartily took off her purple cape and brought the hefty normal suit onto the slender shoulders with the blouse on without taking too much time. Both of them rushed out of the detention room and passed through the passage with the canister giving off white smoke.

Part 4[edit]

They passed through the gravity block and went to the portside container block, also called the first container deck. It was unknown

how many gas canisters Riddhe set up at which locations and it was a layer of thin mist once they passed through the air lock. It was unknown where the smoke came from in the wide space that was 100m long and not less than 30m wide and tall. The piled up containers, preparatory goods and the hanging crane arms from above were all covered with a thin veil. It seemed that new air was being switched in, but they probably could not turn off the air flow. The smoke continued to disperse in from the air ducts, and it looked like the damage was spreading.

“If we don’t know where the fire’s starting from, can’t we just turn off the air flow?”

“We should know where the reported area is from, right? What do you mean that you can’t detect the heat source!?”

Growls echoed all around as the agitated crew members were scurrying around. If the source was a gas canister, they would not be able to pick up the location through a heat signature sensor. Mineva looked down at the chaos from the catwalk railing, and nearly knocked into Riddhe, who suddenly stopped. Riddhe grabbed her hand and pulled her nearly floating body back. He leaned near the communication panel and picked up the microphone on the deck.

“All hands, prepare for vacuum. We’ll now draw away the air on the container deck. Those without normal suits are to evacuate. There’s 30 seconds till the hatch is open.”

The voice that rang throughout the ship’s speakers caused the scattering crew members to stop immediately. The next moment, the black wave of fear started to fill the container deck, and they started moving at a speed several times that of before.

Some leaned towards the lockers with the normal suits inside, some were heading towards the airlock leading to the bridge, leading people in. “Who’s the one making that broadcast? I never heard of such a thing!?” “Hurry up and confirm with the bridge!” The officers’ voices rang as they fought for the. However, these voices would not be able to calm them down. Mineva saw the figures in normal suits rushing around, and stepped on the floor of this passage on Riddhe’s prompting. She grabbed onto Riddhe by the shoulder as he was using the cable gun, and both of them glided past the passage of the container block. They were headed to a space launch on a launching pad. Over there, as the smoke floated around thinly, a green ball-shaped object suddenly appeared from the shadow of the ship, and it rolled its way into Mineva’s sights.

“Haro…?”

She unwittingly called out, and people dressed in normal suits appeared behind it as they waved over. One of them waved over at them, while the other carried Haro and watched their surroundings before hiding inside the launch. Mineva did see that face that was without a helmet on despite her wearing a normal suit. It was Micott Bartsch—*so in that case, the one waving over at us would be Takuya Irei, is it?* Mineva did not have much time to think as the white frame of the space launch was right in front of them, and Mineva followed Riddhe as she reached for the ceiling.

Both of them used inertia to glide to the launch and grabbed onto the open hatch on the portside. Riddhe slipped into the launch first. “Hurry up” a familiar voice could be heard from behind. Mineva got into the space launch together with what looked Takuya in a normal suit.

This space shuttle had been used by the Federation before the One Year War, and there were 4 laser rocket engines installed on the frame that was less than 10m in length. It had a capacity of 10 people excluding the driver. At this point, Micott was sitting on the passenger seat, and she was looking tense and pale as she stared at the steering seat. She met Mineva in the eyes, and looked away awkwardly as she clinged onto Haro on her knees. Mineva felt a sharp pain at the bottom of her stomach as she passed by Micott and moved towards the steering seat in front. The console lights were already indicated, and Riddhe sat on the seat as he did the checks before take-off.

Mineva sat on the co-pilot seat and fastened herself down with the safety belt. She felt pressured by this atmosphere as she got all the way till here. *Are we going to escape using this ship?* This doubt that came way too late spread inside her, but she did not have time to speak up. Takuya closed the hatch, panted and grabbed onto the back of the pilot seat. “Is the airlock opened enough?” He asked as he stared at Riddhe’s face, who did not stop moving his hands as he continued the checks and answered.

“This kind of space launch can be used as an escape shuttle, so it’s possible for us to access the deck controls from here…those guys have finished evacuating, right?”

Riddhe’s voice caused Takuya to bring his helmet-covered head to the concave canopy window and checked the container deck filled with white smoke. The alarm showed no signs of stopping, but there were no signs of any crew members on the deck. “Looks like it’s over.” Takuya answered, and Riddhe answered, “Alright, let’s go.” and quickly operated on the console. The ‘Air’ flickered on the deck wall,

and the warning lights on the floor started spinning for a few seconds. They could feel the continuous alarm sounds fading away rapidly.

The smoke outside the window immediately vanished, and the partition walls in front gradually opened. The large hatch of the pressure room split aside up and down, and the 4-sided space outside the hatch appeared right in front of them. It was the sound of the ship breaking away from the restraints and leaving, and it seemed that Riddhe and the rest were intending to escape from this ship. *Where are they going?* Mineva tried to think, but cringed due to the sudden impact.

A hammer-like sound rang twice, thrice as it rocked the ship, causing bright sparks to scatter all over the place, and the windows were jerking. *Gunshots.* Mineva realized this, and Micott screamed, “THEY’S SHOOTING AT US…!” “Don’t worry, hang on tight!” Riddhe growled. Mineva looked outside the window, and saw two people in normal suits pointing handguns at them as they approached the space launch. Flares popped out from their muzzles, causing sharp impacts to rocked the shuttle.

“We’ll cut the countdown. I’m going to make things rough here. Don’t bite your tongue!”

Riddhe spoke so loudly it was not drowned out by the bullets. Mineva looked back in front and held her breath. The space launch rockets ignited at practically the same time, and the G-force that struck from the front surrounded their bodies. The sight of the container deck instantly disappeared from behind, and the vacuum, where neither the Moon or the Earth could be seen, occupied the windows.

The monitor at the back showed the rectangular supply ship, moving further and further away. The pressure of the acceleration on their organs weakened within several seconds, and Micott’s heaving sound could be heard from behind. “Alright…!” Takuya shouted with a restrained voice, and Haro’s voice rang too “Haro”. Mineva too heaved a sigh of relief, but at this moment—

“It’s not over yet. There’re still mobile suits in the ship.”

Riddhe said with a tense voice that never relaxed, and as a result, Mineva continued to look at the monitor behind. The Federation mobile suits escorting the ships were there, and obviously, this space launch would not be able to beat them. If this heart of the fusion with four limbs floating in vacuum were a fusion core reactor as the heart, the old space launch would be caught be it immediately.

How many seconds passed before the ship grasped the situation and

was ordered to pursue us—how much distance can we gain during this time? Mineva and the other three stared at this 5 inch monitor. There was a small light spot the size of a small thumb appearing on the screen with a white trail.

The sensors showed two “RGM-89s” closing in quickly onto the space launcher. They started their pursuit, and they would be caught up in less than 10 seconds. *Do you have a plan?* Mineva intended to ask this as she glanced at the side of Riddhe’s face, who was looking intently as he focused on piloting. She suddenly felt the ship shaking, and frantically looked in front again.

A small rock flashed by the canopy window, turning the ship slightly with a small impact. The space debris flew in like bullets, faster than the motion sensors that showed many objects, and this showed that the space launch was moving into the shoal space region. The sizes ranged from pebbles to rocks larger than the launch. Though they were moving through the debris, they could not even slow down by one kilometer relatively. The debris field of past colonies continued to close in on them, moving through the body and floated back. They moved by a large rock, and 100m later, the minute debris that were scattered all over the place covered the ship like a sandstorm. Cracking sounds that bullied the armor caused the launch to tremor unstably.

“Wait, are we really alright?”

“I checked the path. If there’s no Minovsky particles scattered, the radar…”

Riddhe answered Micott’s shrieking voice and swallowed what he was about to say. He was wondering what was shining in front, only to find that a material the size of a human was rushing right at them. He immediately tilted the launch greatly, and the safety belt was pressed down on their shoulder muscles. Haro slid out of Micott’s hands and slammed into the wall, and Takuya cried out, “Is it really alright?” “We won’t be able to escape if we just do those cautious things…!” Riddhe answered as he continued to steer. He was already losing focus trying to stare at the settings panel. The sensors would capture the locations of the debris, and he had to use these to find the most suitable escape route. The monitor on the panel showed rectangular blocks entering, all repeating as they formed a 3-dimensional corridor.

The mobile suit pursuers were deliberately slowing down while being wary of the debris, but their speed was still very fast. Both mobile suits used the AMBAC function to dodge around, moving over at a speed the launch could not match. *There’s still a little while until the computer calculates the course*— Mineva saw that the navigation setting panel showed a bar that stated the progress, and looked back at the pursuers’ positions on the sensors, seeing that they were right in front of them. “Alright. It’s here!” Riddhe then yelled and clenched his sweaty fists.

“LET’S GO! GRIT YOUR TEETH!”

At that moment, the 4 laser rocket engines burst out flares, causing the launch to move forward at maximum speed. The hull let out a rattling sound, and everyone was forced down onto the seat. The path calculated by the computer was a complicated route of twists and turns

through the debris, and Mineva and company were basically passengers sitting on a roller coaster as they did not know which side was up or down. As Takuya and Micott screamed out, the launch continued to repeat the complicated maneuvers that tested its limits and entered the shoal space region. The sea of debris floated by messily, and the beam a mobile suit fired raced into the flowing starry space, causing the debris that were hit directly to let out lights of explosions.

The scattered debris spurted out from a parallel level, and what sounded like a large number of pebbles being carried tortured their ears. “It’s just to scare us!” Mineva heard Riddhe’s shout as she looked at the large debris floating over from the front. That was the debris of a mirror that brought sunlight to a colony, and the cracked surface floated in the vacuum together. The launch in automatic mode continued to dodge the fragments floating around as it rushed right at the mirror.

“I’m going to do an emergency brake. There’ll be G-force coming from the back. Get ready.”

He stared at the countdown timer indicated on the navigation setting panel and shouted, 4, 3, 2…ignition . Riddhe’s fist slammed onto the console switch, causing the launch that was headed to the mirror to let out its front exhausts to the maximum. The G-force that struck at that moment rendered Mineva breathless.

Everything that was not held in place were flying to the front of the body, and the safety belts stretched out so much they felt like they were going to snap as they quashed into the body. Mineva spent so much effort preventing her eyeballs from popping out as she did not lift her head. After several seconds that felt like eternity, the launch that braked suddenly stopped its reverse jets—and moved in amongst the debris of the mirror. The ship was moving at a relative velocity completely identical to that of the surrounding debris as it slowly floated in space.

Cough. It was unknown who coughed. The launch was dark inside most probably because the engine lights were shut off. Mineva slowly closed her eyes and stared at the sensor image that was the only thing giving off light. The pursuers’ markers looked like they were puzzled as they scattered aside. *This launch rushed into the shoal space region at a reckless speed and slammed into debris…whether this sounds crazy or not, it’s true that they lost sight of us.* After what seemed like an exceptionally long time, Riddhe said, “Let’s go.”. Mineva however looked up at the canopy, and could see a pale green machine

dragging a trail of thruster jet as it floated through numerous materials.

At this point, no one had the strength to yell out; only sighs of relief could be heard from the gang in this dim launch. Haro, who was bouncing around, finally seemed relaxed as it flapped its ears and asked things like, (Are you alright, Audrey?) This alias that Mineva thought up at the last moment—but was designated onto her during the past few days made her unable to answer as she merely lowered her eyes. Riddhe glanced at her secretly, and spoke up while trying to end things off, “We’ll spend the time here.”

“Once those guys leave, we’ll take action again.”

Riddhe pushed Haro over to Micott, and removed his helmet while looking like he was avoiding Mineva’s stare. *He’s really an overly empathetic person.* Mineva thought as she asked, “What do you intend to do?”

“We’ll take immediately once we get back onto the Nahel Argama.” Riddhe exchanged looked with Mineva for a while, and continued, “We can still catch up to them at this distance, and once we make contact with them, it’ll be the start of the battle. At that time, the communication channel will be sealed off, so they can’t possible contact the “Alaska”. Logically put, it’s impossible for us to be brought back.”

“And then?”

Mineva did not think that things would improve just by them reaching back onto the Nahel Argama. *Does this man knows what fate will befall on him for taking away a troublesome prisoner like me and stole a military resource to escape?* She took off her helmet, gave a doubtful look, and was shocked by another voice “We can only do that.”.

It was Micott. She lowered her eyes, not daring to look at anyone, and her hands held Haro onto her knees tightly. The backup power was connected at this time, and a red light appeared inside the launch, revealing Micott’s bitter and depressed expression.

“We saw what we shouldn’t be seeing, whether it’s that Gundam or you, so there’s no reason for us to be allowed back home safely, right?”

“Besides, there were a lot of people who died or were deemed missing in that battle at “Industrial 7”. We might be counted amongst them at all.”

Takuya followed up. *They’ll kill people to protect their secrets*
— Mineva gave a confirming look to Riddhe, who stuttered “Eh, I don’t

think things will develop to such an extent so easily…" as he looked up to the canopy.

"But if that were the case, what should we do? Even if we get back onto the Nahel Argama…"

"I already thought of it."

Riddhe was only able to go straight to the point at this moment as he clenched his hands on the control sticks.

"It's a risky gamble, but it's not like it won't work. According to the report I got before I left the "Nahel Argama", it seems that their battle will start before afternoon on the 12th. That'll be the moment when "Palau" is closest to earth."

Mineva did not understand what she just heard. "Battle? Did you just say "Palau"…Mineva asked back, and Riddhe gave her a look while saying, "I hope you can help me."

"This isn't simple. I don't know whether it will be successful, but as long as I meet you, even my father will…"

Riddhe stopped here and looked outside the canopy again. "Father… your father?" Riddhe said with a forceful tone to block off Mineva's musing, "It can't be helped."

"If this keeps up, everything will be swept under the table. I hope you can entrust your life to me in order to ensure your safety, and these two's."

The determined expression on Riddhe's face as he left the detention room appeared as they landed on Mineva, causing her to look away immediately. No matter what Riddhe was thinking, his expression showed obvious consideration into this decision. She did not feel that she could simply agree to this easily, and as the void of silent time accumulated, Micott's voice rang in her ears, "This is to save Banagher too."

"I know this shouldn't be something I should be saying. But sorry, I have no intention of apologizing to you. Your army was the one that decimated our colony."

Micott spoke to Mineva, and suddenly looked down as she clasped her hands that were holding onto Haro. Mineva could only watch the face of this girl who looked more frail than anyone else in this launch silently.

"But I want to apologize to Banagher. If I don't, I…"

The end of her words was vague due to her crying. Micott did not intend to speak up anymore as the silent time descended on the ship again. Riddhe seemed to realize that he was on a path of no return as he gave a determined look; Micott's lowered angry face was trembling with wet eyes; and Takuya could only glance at Micott, wanting to reach his hand to her shoulder, but could not. Everyone's feelings filled this launch, making the air inside hot and hard to breathe, and Mineva was forced to look for a place where she could lay her eyes on in the midst of this starry space with countless debris.

What expanded in front of her eyes was merely a frozen darkness, and she could not find anything to look at. However, the feelings of the people gathered here were running towards a certain place, intending to look for another place. *Maybe I am look for some place I can run to, just like how I was guided by what warm hand. But to where?* Mineva's could not think properly as she closed her eyes and sighed out hot air. *Even if we stay in the darkness, we can't continue on to the next scenario. We have to start running—*

Part 5[edit]

"…This is originally an incomplete weapon. The reason why it wasn't removed during the large Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization (FRAM) was simply because of budget issues. We did carry out formal regular activation tests, but we never actually fired for once."

Despite looking tense in front of the Captain, the cannon operator said without hiding his stiff expression. Before Otto could speak up, the gunnery squad leader on standby at the back walked to the front and said,

"Leaving aside the issues regarding the design, I have absolute faith in the maintenance. If you don't mind just one shot, I'll show you how it can hit its target with 120% power.

The well-refined looking muscular body remained still as his energetic voice rang through the power room. *Stop yapping so much.* The cannon operator stared at him with such an expression, not because he was unhappy about how he spoke up while ignoring this officer here, but probably that this gunnery squad leader should not say things he was not confident in. This man's doubting attitude became a fault, and he had the tendency to focus on failures in his heart. "Yes, we'll rely on precision in this battle here. I look forward to your performance." Otto kept his words till this point and just pretended to merely listen to the gunnery squad leader's reliable words. "Yes!", the gunnery squad leader raised his hand to salute and turned right to his workplace.

The cannon operator observed his Captain's expression, and then kicked the floor to return back to his work. The place he was headed to had a standby battery one would mistake for the ship's main engine, and the gunnery team could be seen carrying out their inspections. The soldiers briskly attached the connecter cables of the backup power source that were so thick they needed to be wrapped around with both arms. In contrast, the cannon operator who was left aside was not that excited. He would occasionally give some instructions, but his volume was never as loud as that of the squad leader. The soldiers were obviously ignoring him as well, "This really can't do." First Officer Liam lamented as she observed this same scene.

"It's good that he's serious, but he lacks a sense of authority. Such words won't be able to move officers."

She stated coldly while her stare under those thick eyelids were looking at the cannon operator. *I didn't expect to have the same view as this troublesome woman I have no relation with.* Otto grimaced secretly as he answered, "Well, it's not unreasonable after all."

"Probably no one thought that we would need to use this to blow some things up one day."

The front end of the energy condenser, 10m in diameter and more than 20m in length, had a mega particle generator that was far larger than normal, a beam generator. The mega particles would accelerate through 8 phases, gather inside the ring, and rise through the cannon that was 18m in diameter and monstrously large. If one included the energy, it would be said that this 'grand cannon' that was 50m in length could not be held inside the ship as it was too big, and could only be kept right under the 1st catapult deck, sticking out from the Nahel Argama from the hull of the ship. This was of a different class from the 4 main cannons that were designed on the ship. There had been no weapon like this weapon the ship was ferrying, and it was a mega-particle cannon that exceeded common sense—

"In theory, a hyper mega-particle is a weapon that can match the power of a colony laser and can be aimed at a location…but I've never seen it being fired for real once, even though I did see footage of it."

"I'm the same as you as well. I guess the only ones equipped with such monstrously large things are the last generation's "Argama" and this ship, right? We saw it fail in the end during the Neo Zeon War after all."

This hyper mega particle cannon that caused the Captain and First Officer to say this in unison was basically a beam weapon that was an

enlarged version of an ordinary mega-particle cannon. It was expected that one shot would be enough to bury a large ship, and if they adjusted the firing angle, it was possible to wipe out an entire fleet. This was basically similar to the large-scale mass killing weapon hanging on a colony frame as a cannon, the colony laser hailed as the ultimate cannon weapon. The problem was that the cost effective was worse off, and one hit would use up all the power on the ship.

They had to transfer all the main power in the ship's main generator to the backup, and in that case, they would not be able to use other mega-particle cannons, and even pilot it. Of course, it did not have a rapid-fire option as the cooldown and reload times were all too long. Thus, there was only one chance of using it in battle. It was useful during the First Neo Zeon war, at the battle of Axis, where they were using it to break through, but it would not be efficient when it was a ship on ship battle. In this phase, the war against Zeonism was in the purging stage, and a targeted attack assumption here was basically zero, so the Federation army naturally never had the reason or ability to mass produce limited resources, and could not transfer this over to the other ships. If the costs for the FRAM was not ideal, this hyper mega-particle cannon would definitely be scrapped and sent to a war museum. It would be more efficient for them to turn the empty space to contain mobile suits, which would increase their fighting strength. That would be the case.

But in this battle, this monster that was behind times would become the crux. It would become the lynchpin in this battle to reclaim the RX-0—or rather, to save the civilian. Otto recalled Daguza's seemingly ridiculous idea as he stared at the enemy scape, and sighed out all the heavy air from deep within his stomach. Liam reacted fast as she turned her eyes to him, and spoke with a probing voice, "Are you feeling unsatisfied?"

"No, this might be a reckless strategy, but it does make sense. If we want the Nahel Argama to stake on "Palau" alone, there would be no better plan than this. I too hope to save Banagher Links, but if we focus on this too much…"

What could have may never happen. Otto turned to look at Liam, who had this intent in her incomplete words.

"If we want to reclaim the "Unicorn" too, the risks of this operation will increase as such. I'm thinking whether I'm making our crew risk their lives because of some personal feelings, and I'm still wandering about this."

"In this situation, the only one who can activate the RX-0 is Banagher

Links. If we can't save him together with the RX-0, we can't consider ourselves as having reclaimed the "Laplace Box"."

"Though that's true…"

That's just trying to talk our way out of it. Basically, there's no need for us to be at the Senate Council's whim and risk our lives on this mission to retake the "Laplace Box". We do have the option to just fight with the motions and escape with our tails behind our back. Otto continued to stare at the gunnery squad soldiers who were focused on their work, and lowered his stare to the floor. Liam did not say anything as she took out a photo from her officer uniform pocket and stealthily handed it over to Otto.

The photo that was covered with a layer of coated sheet had a 15,16 year old boy there. He looked rather handsome, and that naïve looking expression did look rather similar to Liam. Otto tensed up slightly and asked, "Your kid?" Like usual, Liam answered without smiling and said to him, "Yes. He's going to be 17 this year."

"My husband died in the battle of Solomon, and my mother's taking care of him. It has been more than half a year since I last saw him…"

Liam continued, and looked at the photo, quipping, "He's like my life." and kept it back into her pocket. It was hard to imagine hearing this line from this person who acted like a woodblock, and Otto could not help but widen his eyes at his First Officer.

"I don't really understand politics, but I told my son that momma's working in the army to carry out justice. I don't think justice will be in this mysterious "Box", but it's another thing trying to save another person. I suppose my son will understand and forgive me even if I can't return home because of this."

Liam said this with a serious face and continued, "I suppose the other crew members are the same too, and kept her mouth shut." That direct attitude of hers and the enigmatic look was something he did not like about his First Officer, but she looked rather affectionate at this point, causing Otto to say "Is that so." And smile.

People will sometimes end up in tough situations, and when they have nowhere else to rely on, they would rely on existences beside them that were like treasures. Otto thought that there was no need for them to give up their life so easily, and at that moment, a short alarm indicating an emergency meeting rang inside the power room.

(We've received an emergency contact from an allied space launch. Captain, First Officer, please head to the Bridge.)

The broadcast that indicated merely the bare minimum caused Liam to change expressions and mutter, “A launch?” It was unexpected to hear an ally contacting them so casualty in this space where there might be enemy ships patrolling. “At this time…!” it was unknown whether the groan came faster as Otto kicked the floor and floated to the power room door. He rushed through the communication shaft of the cannons department and left the hyper mega-particle cannon area at the hull. He returned back inside the ship, and the elevator leading to the bridge was right in front of him.

Part 6[edit]

The elevator door just opened, and Liam entered the bridge at a speed she would never lose to. Otto used his hand to stop Ensign Mihiro who was about to get up, and spoke, “Whose ship is that?”

“Yes. The identification code classified it as a launch from the “Alaska”, but…”

Mihiro put her hand on the headset, and turned her face that grasped this vague situation to the communication console. The monitor was full of noise, and it was impossible to see the person’s face. As Otto frowned, a familiar voice rang through the voice box, (Can you hear me, Ensign Mihiro?), causing the air sucked into his nostrils.

(We don’t have enough thruster fuel here. Please hurry up and allow us to land. Is Uncle Raccoon there!?)

Raccon. This word itself caused everyone on the bridge to look at Otto. Of course, no Captain would be able to remember the voices of more than 200 crew member, but Otto heard this voice before. He coughed to clear the abnormal air here, and said, “Who are you? Are you a crew member of ours?” ignoring Liam as he picked up the microphone on the console.

(To the launch approaching here, this is the Uncle Raccoon of the “Nahel Argama”. Specify the passengers’ ranks and names.)

After an awkward pause for about 2, 3 seconds, (Yes, I’m Ensign Riddhe Marcenas of the Nahel Argama mobile suit squad!) a voice came from the speakers. The face of the “prince” he faced several days ago clearly appeared in his mind, making him speechless. “Ensign Riddhe…?” Liam mused as both of them looked at each other, and Otto turned his unfocused stare to the communication monitor that was full of noise.

(I’m approaching the Nahel Argama with 2 civilians here. Please allow me to board.)

“What’s going on? What happened with the “Alaska”?”

(I didn’t receive any instructions from the “Alaska”, but came to the Nahel Argama on my own.)

The atmosphere inside the bridge suddenly tensed up. Otto quickly held onto the microphone and asked Mihiro, “Can we contact the “Alaska”?”. Mihiro answered, “We can’t. It’s impossible if we don’t leave the shoal space region.” and Otto stared at the launch’s current position on the navigation monitor.

If they believed the information the Senate Council sent over, there would be less than 20,000km direct distance to the area the enemy patrols would be at. Otto stared at the monitor that caught sight of the launch, and made the conclusion that it did so despite knowing the consequences, and spoke into the microphone, “Why did you come back?”

(I’m a pilot of the Nahel Argama. I came back because I want to live and die together with the ship.)

“You should understand that this is against military orders, right?”

(I realized it already. Regarding the two civilians, I considered that it might be dangerous to hand them over to the Senate Council like this, so I brought them along.)

“He said they will be in danger…” Mihiro muttered and stared at Otto. These civilian had already known about classified military secrets, and the Senate Council would not just let them head back home so freely. Otto himself did think of this possibility before, but could not answer for certain, causing him to look away awkwardly. Otto exchanged understanding looks to Liam, and in place of doubtful answer, he simply told her to “Allow them to land.” and handed the microphone over to Mihiro.

Otto deliberately avoided looking at Mihiro’s doubtful look as she took the microphone. “To the approaching launch, our ship will allow you to land. Please match our relative velocity and abide by the deck manager’s instructions to enter from the back.” Mihiro said this, and Otto had his back turned on her as he again looked up at the visual on the sensor screen. *No matter whether the “Nahel Argama” survives or not, Ensign Riddhe’s military career will be at an end. He did such a reckless thing…well, I can say that, but no half-baked determination is going to allow him to use such a small launch to shake off the “Alaska”s detection, pass through the shoal space region full of debris and catch up with us. What prompted him to do this?* Such a doubt

started to appear in Otto's mind.

If they just wanted to ensure the safety of two civilians, it would be a weird thing to think of escaping to the "Nahel Argama" preparing for battle. From Riddhe's words of wanting to live and die together with the ship, it's clear that he knew how dangerous the battle that was about to start was. It was logical of him to contact them when communications were sealed off, and obviously, this was not something thought of at the spur of a moment— The indecisive thoughts started creeping up in him, and as the navigation operator asked, "Is this really alright?" Otto was at a loss of words. Liam stepped forward in place of Otto, and said,

"There's still less than six hours before the battle. We can't send them back now anyway. Tell the guards to carry out a thorough check on the launch."

"Captain." Liam added on for confirmation, and the navigation operator gave a believing look as he looked back at the console. *Just ask the person himself.* Otto nodded at Liam, who gave this expression, and looked at the watch.

9.07am. It's definitely less than 6 hours before the first phase of battle at 15.00. Should we view this as a lucky omen, or…

Part 7[edit]

The activation switch was pressed, and the low buzzing of the power flow shook the exterior of the machine, and the aged motor sound roared as it spun. The conveyor belt soon started operating, and the gears of the crusher could be heard activated it rattled.

"Amazing!" It moved!" Tikva ignored the cheers of the children as he poured the rocks on the cart onto the conveyor belt. The large fist-sizes rocked would first get crushed by the crusher, and then get polished by grease before being washed by a jet stream of water. The minerals would be stuck on the grease, so they would not be washed away by the water, and the remaining rock scraps would be removed easily here. The chosen pieces of minerals would then be set aside and poured into a bag at the end point.

This machine was set up behind Gilboa's house, in a workshed smaller than a garage, so it was definitely not a large machine. The minerals they could obtain were just a teeny-weeny portion, but to Tikva and the rest, this was an important machine supporting their family income. "How did you do it?" The second son asked with excitement. "The gears had oil stains all over it. I just cleaned them up." Banagher

answered as he covered the maintenance hatch of this sorting machine. He used the towel hanging on his neck to wipe away his sweat, and the 4-year-old daughter pointed at him and laughed, “Your face is all black!”

Banagher touched his face, and noticed at the towel was already stained thoroughly by grease. Gilboa’s wife seemed to chuckle unwittingly as she said, “You helped us a lot.” and handed a new towel over to him.

“It’s a lot easier now. I did ask my husband to repair this before, but he would always be busy doing something during the rare times he come back...Tikva, you have to learn from big brother Banagher here. You have to learn how to repair it on your own even if daddy’s not around.”

“Got it. I saw it and remembered.”

Tikva sat down on a barrel of machine oil and answered with a tantrum. There was no reason for a prisoner to teach him…or rather, it could be said the reason why Tikva threw a tantrum was because that at his age, he would resist those who treated him like a child. Banagher inadvertently gave a smile and switched off the power source for the time being. “I’m telling you, mama used this to sort the rocks that can and can’t be used!” Banagher patted the young daughter who got over to his side and explained, and looked up at the sky through the roof workshed. The light that shone in through the brown clouds was the artificial sun of “Palau” he got used to seeing after the second day.

During the day, most of the men would head out to the excavation field, while the women would focus on choosing the rocks, or make screws or all sorts of things. The proper quarry plant was located outside the “Palau”, and they did everything from refining to molding, so the families’ factory produce as a whole was just a small percentage. The rocks inside the rocks storage of the living quarters—all the rocks dug out when the living block round cylinder, the shield machine was working—would be moved out, and one of the work specifics was to sort out these rocks scraps, and in nature, they were just ‘family handicraft’ where they could only earn so little despite working so hard. The efficiency here was very low compared to the automated system of “Industrial 7” and the machinery here was so old it was reminiscent of the Middle Ages. But the residents of “Palau” had viewed this form of living as a way of life, and spent many days doing so. The reality Banagher himself faced at this point was to kill time by repairing machines.

Marida and Gilboa went out, and the children had to head to school.

He was left alone as a prisoner, and had nothing else but time to spend. Banagher went around Gilboa's house randomly, found this faulty machine, and told himself to repair this on Gilboa's wife request. He borrowed a set of tools that was said to be left behind since Gilboa's grandfather's generation, and wrestled against this installation that could be said to be an antique. It was better than being alone—and even though it was just this level of manual labor, but after hearing the sound of this sorting machine regain its life, and heard the cheers of the children coming back home, Banagher had to admit that he felt a sense of fulfillment he never had before.

No matter who that person was, it was not a bad feeling when someone got thanked by another person. Banagher could feel that he was actually helping someone by doing this, and to him, it was a source of hope that could help him continue to live. *Don't think of any unnecessary things when working. Just focus on the job at hand. What will happen to me after this, and what I'm doing—I don't have to worry about this. It's true that I'm running away from reality, but it's true that I can relax my mind by moving my body and working out some sweat. I never worked seriously on the machines when I studied like an apprentice monk, studying for several hours—or maybe that's because I'm being relied for something?* Banagher recalled Marida's face inside the cave church, and landed his sights on the grease-stained hand. "Where did you learn such things?" Tikva said, and he lifted up his head.

"From school. Anaheim Electronics Industrial College. That's a place to learn how to take care of machines."

"I know Anaheim. It's a company that produces mobile suits, right? The "Geara Zulu" daddy pilots and the Captain's "Sinanju" are made by Anaheim."

Tikva said confidently as he let the toy glider fly. Banagher associated the term 'Captain' with the masked man, and asked back, "The "Sinanju", as in that red mobile suit?"

"Yeah. But the rumors that Neo Zeon stole it were all lies. Anaheim did not want to show that it was helping Neo Zeon, and said that it was stolen."

"…Oh."

Banagher had no other way to answer. Tikva did not allow him to reflect on these words, and asked curiously, "Can I go to that school?"

"Of course…you want to?"

“Yes. Neo Zeon will be willing to use me if I’m familiar with machines, right?”

“But if you join the army too, no one can help your mother.”

“Stupid. It’s because I want to help mama that I want to join the army. She herself said that we can’t survive for long just by working in the quarries. Daddy said that he didn’t know when something will happen to him…”

TIkva bit his lips and threw the glider out like he was throwing stones. The anxiety and anger this stubborn child had was thrown out, and the glider could not ride on the wind as it landed right inside the yard. Banagher turned his back around, picked up that toy that resembled the “Homo Avis”, and said, “You’re amazing, Tikva.” as he realized his ignorance. He did not have the right to speak like an adult, but he had no other words to express this form of self-defeat within him.

“But I wonder if things can stop?”

“What can?”

“The war. Whether it’s your dad or Marida, I don’t think they like to fight, right? Both sides got battered, and everyone suffered, so I think it’s about time we should stop.”

“Are you telling us to surrender?” Tikva started to give a disgusted look as he said this. Banagher felt that he said unnecessary things, but continued, “I’m not talking about who wins or lose.”

“What I want to say is whether both sides can back off a little and talk.”

Banagher could not say anything more as he looked at the glider. They had a leader like Mineva who could think, and a soldier like Marida who could control herself. It seemed that such people alone would be able to end the war, but reality kept forcing children like Tikva to consider joining the war, continuing the situation. This could only be described as reality, and Banagher could do nothing but shamefully admit his ignorance. *Are these the things Zinnerman wants me to ‘study’? To understand the current situation, and to realize that what I learnt in this current situation is just knowledge; this original ‘knowledge’ is to consider what’s after this and having the power to change the current trend, and this learning is a process to integrate thought elements.*

The power to change the present, the possibilities—the unfamiliar memories pulsated in his temples as he stared at Tikva’s face. Tikva gave a somewhat doubtful look back at him, and started shaking the

legs reaching down the oil barrel, patting his retreating head as he said,"…I don't really understand."

"But without war, daddy and the rest will lose their jobs. More people will be without jobs. I'm wondering if that's a bother."

"Now that you say it…"

This time, he really had nothing to say. This was the difference between those involved and those not involved—no, Banagher just felt that his knowledge which had no considerations for others were crushed, and he looked away from Tikva. There wasa saying that knowledge alone would not have power, and this scenario in front of him was a prime example of this. However, his temples kept pulsating, and he in reality could only say child-like words to a child, even though he was merely someone who could not use any useful knowledge…

A sense of shame, and anger, rose up within him. He switched hands to pick up the glider and threw it at Tikva. The glider became a vent of frustration without an exit as it flew above Tikva's head, over the short wall outside the house, and disappeared.

"You're bad at it!" Tikva teased. "Sorry, I'll get it back." Banagher said and left the workplace. He heard the singing of the daughter as he passed by the outside of the short wall beside Gilboa's house. The glider with a wing that was about to fall off landed in the midst of a path covered with dust. Banagher was about to pick it up, and detected a shadow moving up to him on the road, darkening his sights.

He looked up, and saw a man he never met before standing there. He had medium build and high, and was wearing dirty work clothes with a hunter's hat. It was obvious that he was like the quarry workers that were often seen, but in the midst of his drunken red face, there was a sense of tension in his eyes. Banagher inadvertently backed away, and the man spoke, "You're Banagher Links, right?", causing him to nod.

"Wait at the 3rd dock of the 14th Space Gate at 6pm. Someone will be there to receive you."

The deep yet fine voice grazed past his ears as it moved by Banagher, and something was stuffed in his hands. Before he recovered, the man had already turned around the corner of the alley, and he could only vaguely see the fluttering of his shirt. "Erm, excuse me…!" But even with that call, the man never responded, and Banagher looked at what was stuffed into his hand.

Two A4-sied monitor sheets were rolled up. One of them was a 3D

visual of the “Palau”, indicating the full view of the location in a grid format. The other was the actual scene of the space gate, and one would think that it was a crude visual recorded secretly, and the red light that probably designated the location was blinking.

Banagher checked that there was no one else around, and stared at the monitor again. As his face approached the monitor, something dropped onto the floor. Banagher picked up that thing which looked like a ball-point pen, but it was a little heavier. Most likely, it was some small transmitter—this instinct caused Banagher’s hairs to stand up, and he could not help but kick the floor.

That man passed through the alley and was about to turn around. Banagher called out to him, “Please wait!” as he tried to catch up with all he had. He grabbed the man, who kept moving, by the shoulder and asked, “What do you mean that someone will come pick me up? Who are you?” The man shrugged his arm off and gave Banagher a sharp expression, saying, “Don’t make too much noise.”

“Follow these instructions if you don’t want to die. This place will become a battlefield immediately.”

Banagher gasped, and this man did not let go of this opportunity as he quickly turned around the corner. Banagher frantically followed him, but did not see the man on the road surrounded by old unit houses on both sides. The man disappeared like a puff of smoke, and the only one there was an old granny with her back arched.

“You say this place will become a battlefield...”

Banagher gripped onto the ball-point pen that felt very heavy, and looked around at the streets that looked rather blurry in the afternoon. The regular sound of the grinder could be heard like a machine gun at this point, and Banagher felt that his feet swaying. *Is it the Federation? Is that man an undercover spy or something? Don’t joke around. This is just a pitstop the Neo Zeon Army often use, not some military facility. A spy like this around should know. Why exactly is the Federation here —*

As he thought about this, a jolt shot up his spine. It did not matter where the location was. The Federation had been aiming for the “Laplace Box”. They were preparing to take action, just like how it was in “Industrial 7”. They wanted to take back the crux of the Box…the “Unicorn”. They never cared about anything else, and the reason why they sent a spy over to contact him was to ‘take back’ the only pilot who could activate the “Unicorn”. The Federation was about to arrive. The vicious fangs of violence that gnawed “Industrial 7” to bits would

strike “Pala”.

The glider slipped out of his hand and silently fell onto the floor. Banagher’s left hand, which was holding onto the monitor sheets, was frozen like stone, and his numb right hand picked up the glider as he started running.

First, he had to meet the man he just saw. He wanted to use that man to contact the Federation to tell them to stop the invasion of “Palau”. He knew that this definitely could not be done, but he could not stop his running as he ran mindlessly through the narrow alleys with the ‘hill’ of oxidized rocks as a reference. He ran down to the subway station through his own memory of the previous day. He passed by a cart full of dirt , and after an umpteenth turn, Banagher’s head nearly knocked into an oncoming person.

The person stepped aside before Banagher stopped. Banagher barely managed to stop himself from falling, and gasped as he faced the person around the corner.

“What is it? Why are you here?”

Marida was not really taken aback as she asked with a clear voice. “Well…” as Banagher was about to speak up, he met Zinnerman, who was behind Marida, right in the eyes, and immediately hid the monitor sheets behind him.

If I explain everything here, they will tell everything to the entire army. The Federation army will be ambushed, and the man just now will be caught. Riddhe, Mihiro, Daguza, the Captain whose name I didn’t manage to remember, the operators, they’re not just fighting units called soldiers, but people with flesh and blood; the faces of the “Nahel Argama” crew members appeared in Banagher’s mind, causing him to shut up. *Of course, they might not be the ones approaching. Since they have such damage, and Daguza and Audrey are on board, it’s reasonable to assume that another squad is attacking, but it’s not fine even if it’s like this—*

This thought appeared for a short moment, “Banagher?” as Marida frowned and asked, causing him to recover. He reached out the glider in his right hand and pushed it at Marida. “Erm, please return this to Tikva.” and backed away like he was about to trip.

“I’ll be back soon. So then.”

The siren indicating 3pm rang, “Banagher!” and with Marida’s cry behind him, he started sprinting wildly again. *What should I do? What can I do?* The melody of the siren seeped into his mind that was

repeating his musing, and the thoughts that could not find any solutions became even more corroded. There were still 3 hours until the operation began. Banagher felt the transmitter in his hand become heavier as his feet never stopped moving, kicking up the dust on the way.

Part 8[edit]

“Have they made contact? …No, it’s alright. We can leave the mouse alone. That’s a disposable spy, so it’s impossible for him to get that much information.”

The 3pm siren rang. The downtown block would let out an interrupted siren, and the uppertown would have a clear bell chime indicating tea time. This bell was something the man called the superintendent imported from Europe on Earth. Angelo tried to force himself to listen to this annoying sound that entered his ears, and picked up the ivory carved receiver.

“More importantly, the “Unicorn”s transported as planned, right? … Right. Let it remain at an obvious place. That person will definitely find it.”

As expected, there was a doubtful voice from the phone. Angelo turned behind and saw Full Frontal bring the teacup to his lips, and could only exert pressure by saying, “This is the Captain’s orders. Don’t think of anything unnecessary.” And hung up. DING. The antique phone let out a clear crisp sound, mixing into the bell chime that stopped ringing.

“Are your things done, Lieutenant Angelo?”

A somewhat bothersome voice in contrast to the bell chime rang, and Angelo turned his face as he was about to click his tongue. The light rays from the artificial sun shone into the reception room, and the sight of Pepe Meganan’s lightly tan smiling was over there.

The large body that accumulated so much fat had a loose Roman styled robe draped all over him, and his perverted looking face was staring at Angelo. This was his ancestor’s birthplace—a clothing of the Southern tribes on Earth, but to Angelo, whether it was those dazzling gold large rings or the rings that were piled up on the caterpillar-like fingers, these were just some crude class goods. This was really befitting of the owner of this residence, draped in such luxurious clothing and ignoring temperaments. This was how the superintendent of “Palau” was like.

Such Zeonism believers were a laughing stock, but they could not

show any signs of disgust to Pepe, who was a sponsor of the "Sleeves". "Yes, sorry to be rude on the phone!" Angelo answered as courteously as possible and returned back behind Frontal. *Are things progressing as planned?* Angelo nodded at this suspicious-looking stare through the mask, and cleared his expression as he stared at Pepe. "He's rather capable for a young man." The superintendent of "Palau" said with lots of irony.

"With young people like him, I suppose there's hope for Neo Zeon's future, right? Captain Full Frontal?"

"We need supporters like you to establish this line, Superintendent Pepe. Or I wouldn't be so sure."

"No no. Someone like me is just an opportunistic person with this sudden chance. I'll be really honored if I can contribute even a little to the revival of Neo Zeon. Besides, we can reclaim the land robbed from us for generations due to the Forced Migration, and end our ancestors' regrets of living their last days inside the Asteroid Belt.

Pepe continued to chuckle as he gulped down grape wine that were from Burgundy. No matter whether his words were true or not, it was a fact that his ancestors lived their lives developing the Asteroid Belt. He lost his father at an early age due to space radiation, and was forced to spend times of tears with his mother and brothers. Soon after, he became a representative of a labor union that was formed, and while he worked hard to improve the work environment, he skillfully provoked riots and strikes, managing to establish himself amongst the financial world. During the war especially, Pepe had a tight relation with the Pergamino family who invested heavily in ship repairs, and there were rumors that more than half of the quarry resources used for repairs were resold by Pepe through illegal means. Side 6, which maintained a neutral standpoint at that time, had a large number of floating docks, and so, that meant that as the Pergamino Shipping Company treated both Federation and Zeon forces as its customers, Pepe manipulated the organizations within the Asteroid Belt.

After the war, Pergamino retreated, but Pepe continued to remain in touch with Side 6, and offered some power in regards to the political stability on Side 6. In this sense, Pepe was undoubtedly a bureaucrat supporting Neo Zeon's army, and one could say that he was someone who established himself from the Forced Migration plan, but he was a very ardent supporter. At this point, the passion to improve the work environment in the Asteroid Belt was not like before, and his shameless attitude of sitting on this throne of authority, leeching his labor camp, would remind one of the theory the media talked about,

about how ‘the political season was over’. After the One Year War and the two Neo Zeon wars, the celestial space thought of gaining independence gradually became a fading yearning, but there were industrial forces trying to brew this sort of thinking. The fighters who tried soft methods in the past pulled back from the battle, and ended up squeezing out from the grassroots, creating an Earth Celestial Sphere where no one cared about.

To Pepe, the assistance to the “Sleeves” was just a form a investment, and the military understood that he was one of the culprits making things complicated in military affairs. Angelo did not feel that Pepe was someone worthy of being heavily involved in the revival of Neo Zeon, and could not even let down his guard. Pepe said, “But as the person entrusting “Palau”s safety to you, I have a minimum request.” causing Angelo to raise his eyebrows slightly.

“I’ll be especially bothered if you don’t notify me of an incident like what happened to “Industrial 7”. Besides, I have to consider the pride of Side 6.”

“As I had just said, that was not expected. I’m really grateful for your utmost support, Superintendent Pepe, but we can’t notify you regarding all the military matters.”

“I understand. Just notify me about these random stuff like usual. I have no intent of nitpicking the military’s actions.”

Pepe gave a diplomatic tone in response to Frontal’s answer as expected. *How much does this man understand regarding the “Laplace Box”?* As Angelo thought about this, Pepe’s eyes narrowed slightly, and spoke in a direct and fatal voice.

“Speaking of which, I’m still wondering about Her Highness Mineva’s illness. Has she still not recovered?”

This was an irritating point about this man. Despite living in this life of extreme luxury, he never lost his instincts as an investor. “I’m sorry, but she’ll come and greet you when she has time. I think she’s showing fatigue from having to hide from people for a long time.” Angelo heard Frontal’s machine-like voice as he stared at Pepe. “Is that so? I do visit a family doctor often. Please notify me if the illness persists.” Pepe said while giving a certain look that Mineva herself was not around.

“The revival star of Zeon has to be around. You may have built up this current Neo Zeon army…the army organization “Sleeves” that caused terror in the Federation, but the center of this organization is directed

by Her Highness Mineva."

Pepe lit the cigar in his mouth and slowly stood up. "It's because of the Zabi's inheritance that what couldn't be fulfilled can be fulfilled, and we managed to continue doing things that wouldn't work till now. But if Her Highness Mineva keeps shying away from people, we may have to reconsider."

Pepe said these threatening words as he glanced aside at Angelo, who unwittingly clenched his fist. Right in front of him, Frontal answered, "We'll take note of that." as he continued to put on a stone cold mask on his face. Pepe's fat lips tilted slightly, and looked through the wall window, down at the courtyard of his residence.

"Even so, a symbol is still a symbol. What the soldiers are seeing is you, the Second Coming of the Red Comet. You're the one standing on the frontlines, waving the flag, and the organization's able to gain the strength of unity and implementing…no, I suppose this is just my business sense at work."

"It's the same in the army."

"That's right, isn't it? That's why this current Neo Zeon army is so strong. However, it's not easy to see this from the outside. Zeon will never get a real revival if it can't gain the support of everyone in the Earth Celestial Sphere. I'm a believer in the old Republic army, but the fact is that many foolish people would reject the Zabi name. in that sense, there might be limitations in having Her Highness Mineva as the center of this organization."

"May I know what are you trying to imply, superintendent?"

"I said it before, didn't I? I'm just an investor, a businessman. I just feel that if the one I'm investing in has a seed that can sprouting rapidly hidden within, I'll try to let it bloom even if it's not of my personal preference…Char Aznable."

This voice sounded neither like a confession nor a call. Frontal ignored Angelo, who inadvertently looked back, and continued to look forward with an unmoved face.

"Alternatively, Casval Deikun. As the orphaned son of Zeon Deikun, I hope that it's possible to remove the mask and show up in front of everyone again…I'm not the only one to hope for this."

Pepe's back faced the fountain in the yard as he exhaled smoke deeply. *So he stated Mineva's absence as a prelude to this conversation?* Angelo understood this and waited for the response of

the masked man called “The Second Coming of Char”, whether he would take off the mask and reclaim the throne of Zeon’s revival—after several seconds of silence, Frontal said, “Char Aznable is a man who lost.” and on hearing that, Pepe’s trembling face was reflected on the window.

“And he’s a dead man. The reason why I put on this mask is because I know that death made Char’s name a legend. Thus, I’m just playing a role. I have no interest in whether he’s alive or not.”

“Then, you don’t have any intent to remove that mask in the end, is that right?”

“I don’t feel there’s a need to do so.”

In front of you, that is. Angelo seemed to hear a voice that added on to the meaning to these words. Pepe however curled his lips up without understanding and muttered, “What a pity.”

“Her Highness Mineva would not show up, and a Red Comet who’s just an illusion…looks like I invested in the wrong party, did I?”

“You really like to joke around, superintendent.”

Angelo finally could not hold in his emotions as he interrupted with a sharp voice. Pepe did not show any signs of wavering as he shrugged his shoulders and said, “Pardon my rudeness.”

“My nerves are a little sensitive due to a lack of night. Besides, it seems that it had been rather noisy at the ‘cove’ since last night.

The term ‘backstabbed’ would refer to this situation. This man acutely sniffed out the fleet’s movements as it prepared to defend against the Federation’s ambush. “I do understand…that you’ve been hiding the army’s tactics from me.” Pepe said, and it sounded like sarcasm to Angelo.

“But like I said before, I’m the superintendent of “Palau”, and I have a duty to protect the civilians. Of course, everyone here is mentally prepared for danger, but I do hope we can have definitive proof for this price. What I’m saying is that we can have proof that makes us think it’s worth getting involved.”

Simply put, you’re Char, right? Pepe’s steady and warm stare was met with Frontal’s cool attitude. “We have no intent of getting you involved in this.” The voice that rang sounded as cold as an ice block, raising goosebumps on Angelo.

“We’ll leave this place.”

The tall and big figure clad in crimson red uniform got up as Frontal said this in a monotonous manner. Angelo knew that it was to be expected, but he did not expect it to be mentioned in such a situation as he withstood the wavering look within him. Pepe too looked like it was completely unexpected as he said with an agitated tone, “This… doesn’t sound like a joke you’ll make, Captain.”

“Is that so? This isn’t a joke. I’m here to visit you today to bid farewell to you too.”

Bits of cigar ash dropped from Pepe’s fingertips as his mouth was wide open. Frontal kept his silent smiling face and looked at the “Palau” sky that was behind the window Pepe was standing at.

“…Looks like it’s start.”

His face seemed to show that he caught sight of the enemy’s presence from the other end of the artificial sun, in the space behind the thick layer of rock. *The Federation’s attack—is coming earlier than expected.* Everything faded away quickly; the decorations that were as luxurious as possible, and Pepe, who was standing there blankly. The rising sense of battle rose within Angelo.

Part 9[edit]

Radar weapons had been viewed as useless ever since the discovery of Minovsky particles, but electronic warfare itself had not vanished. Due to the rampant nature of it, Minovsky particles had to be scattered during every single battle, so the particles that were scattered would rarely cause much damage to the electrical equipment. In other words, electronic weapons were effective equipment, and even at this point, military facilities relied on the warning system that relied on electronics. The Minovsky radar that could detect the range and density the particles were spread had been used for a long time, and basically, sentry watches were unchanged on the battlefield ever since the radar era.

“Palau” here was no exception. The Asteroid had multiple radar stations on the surface, and many RMS-119 “Zack” in the watch zones were acting as Early Warning and Control (EWAC). The siren stations, linked with the radar stations, were equipped with interception missiles, and the defense perimeter was overly strict for a civilian mining asteroid. However, the Federation army never viewed this as a problem during its regular checks. The radar stations were derived from the ones the Federation set up during the One Year War, and the missile were cleared under the name of shooting down the space debris. They could not find any reason to hide the mobile suits

equipped with EWAC on the head, but they just needed to hide them in the ‘cove’ during the inspections.

April 12, 15.28. A “Zack” on patrol caught sight of a piece of debris that entered the space region they were guarding. That unit’s pilot quickly went to the scene, and reported to the radar station in charge of this area.

“Lorgnette 3 calling Big Eye. There’s an irregular in the Yap region. Should remain cautious. Sending my coordinates here.”

After the war, the “Eye-Zack” was built with the Federation’s RMS-106 “Hi-Zack” as a base, reinforced as an electronic weapon. It had the silhouette of the main fighting force of the Old Zeon Republic, the “Zaku”. It was possible to say that this line of silhouette was suitable for Neo Zeon’s se, but the dome line that was unified with the head was no less than 10m long, and the machine itself looked like someone wearing a really scary hat. The pilot clumsily drove the light grey machine around the debris in question. This block of rock seemed to have floated over from the colony debris, and the largest piece was about 15m. This small block would not cause much damage even if it crashed into “Palau”, but the army was on standby. The pilot let the “Eye-Zack” raise its machine gun and aimed at the surface of the debris. He set the firing mode to single fire, and his finger was placed on the firing trigger on the ball-shaped joystick, but an allied pilot’s voice came from the wireless communication. (Don’t do that. You’ll just waste your bullets.)

“But…!”

(Or you’ll end up writing a reflection again. Since you reported it, leave it to the alert side.)

The “Geara Zulu” pilot who was the same patrol squad did not have any other opinions. The money used to fire a shot would be enough to pay for one month’s worth of food for a person on Palau. This was the catchphrase of their squad leader, and the subordinates were forced not to use simulated projectiles in training. Even so, he had to bear full responsibility if something happened, so there was nothing less worthwhile than working in the army. The pilot of the “Eye-Zack” left the scene as he left the mission of observing the debris to the statio. There was less than a hundred million chance that the debris might hit the asteroid surface. In that case, they would have to use the intercepting missiles or let the mobile suits defending the facilities shoot to change the trajectory.

However, this block of debris was not on course to crash into “Palau”.

The debris was moving on the same course, looking like it was moving rather slowly to “Palau”. The debris was taken off alert after it looked like it would float over the top of the main area, the “Calyx” and into another direction, and the radar station got back to normal. The debris then slowed down, and there was no reason for them to know why there was a heat source awakening within it.

There was a mass driver firing rail poking out from the top of the triangle-shaped “Calyx”, the nose tip of the “Palau” that looked like a beast’s skullcap. The array of rocks slipping through the perimeter net could be seen floating around. The debris slipped through the rocks and ignited a fake balloon that mimicked the color of the rocks. Two “Lotos” appeared from it, and as the balloon disappeared, the machines scattered and quickly mixed in amongst the rocks.

A “Loto” equipped with long cannons on both shoulders stuck itself onto the surface of the “Palau”, and another one with 4 Gatling cannons adjusted its position and created another fake balloon from the multi-purpose silo on its arms. That balloon immediately expanded and formed the exact same shape as the one that surrounded the two machines, and moved off towards the tip of “Palau” with unchanging speeds. The two “Lotos” covered for each other and snuck down onto the rock layer of the “Palau”. They then released several men in normal suits from the infantry transport room behind.

The ECOAS members carried the portable verniers they called the landmovers on their backs and gradually floated in the air. It was hard to distinguish their deep brown normal suits with the rocks as they carried the landmovers equipped with fire extinguishers on their back, not letting out any dust-like presence at all as they glided onto “Palau”s surface. These men passed through the bottom of the alert side’s invigilation window and head towards the connecting shafts linking the “Calyx” and the three “Corollas”. No medium showed this group of men moving beside some dust from the rock layers swaying around, and they climbed onto the bottom of the shafts in less than 30 minutes.

They got past the bottom of the “Gaza D” that acted as a cannon, and split up to many different shafts. The AMX-006 “Gaza D” was a transformable mobile suit that used the mega-particle cannon as part of its body. When transforming, the arms would be folded behind, and the legs that were like a wild bird would support the cannon. 16 ECOAS 729 members started their operation with the “Gaza D” practically transformed into a cannon. Their tasked job was to climb the shafts and plant sticky high-explosive bombs there.

The shafts linking the large asteroids were 30m long in diameter, and

the external thickness that surrounded this linear car path was about 1m thick. The largest shaft was about 3km, and if one counted the support pillars outside the quarry factories, there were 10 batches of shafts leading up and down. It was seemingly too tough to blow up these constructs completely, but if they set up a suitable amount of explosives at the crux and set off a chain reaction with maximum damage, all the materials would be blown away by their own weights. Such places included weak areas like shaft connectors, water pipes for cooling and a power generator installation near the exterior. The members climbed up the long and wide exterior of the shafts and got to work setting up the explosives.

The explosives that were used were the plastic explosives SHMX-type that could be used even in near absolute zero temperature, and they could adjust the formation accordingly in order to get the expected outcome of destruction. If they wanted to cut off a point, they would set up a thin rhombus-shaped diamond charge. If they wanted to blow it up, they would use a plate charge that had piercing ability. These methods were all part of the intricate mathematics required in explosiveness and construction engineering, and all the ECOAS members were well trained in them. This group of men was inside the Asteroids that were floating around, carrying out the simple yet dangerous mission only they could do with the hollow of the ‘cove’ the Neo Zeon army was docked at right below their eyes.

Commander Nasri Razal was hiding inside one of the two “Lotos” behind the rocks, the one with long-ranged cannons on both shoulders, and felt that this was a really long moment. The end of the operation was to be 2 hours later, and they could not check on the progress as long as communications were sealed. They had to continue on in this still time until all the members finished their work and came back safely.

“Don’t make a mistake here. Daguza’s watching after all…”

He brought his eyes to the periscope at the driver seat and stared at the green nightvision image. He could see the round cylinders of the debris in the quarry block, but could not see the shafts. He turned the periscope around and turned towards the space where debris was floating at. At that moment, an enemy patrol unit pointed the gun at him, and his heart froze. Since he lost the disguise balloon, there was no hoping for a second time lucky.

I can’t make a mistake here. I have to let my subordinates return. Nasri’s sweaty hands held onto the grip of the periscope as he focused on the surroundings. A mobile suit form “Gaza D” seemed to

swap around duties as it silently glided over to “Loto”.

Part 10[edit]

(Everyone, this is the Captain speaking. We’ve confirmed that the advanced ECOAS squad has reached the destination. The operation will now move to the second phase. Mobile suit squad, get ready to launch. I look forward to everyone’s contributions.)

Captain Otto’s voice rang through the mobile suit, and this heroic mood from him was completely different from the usual Uncle Raccoon he was like. The supporting Manhunters seemed to have landed safely on “Palau”. Riddhe put on the helmet of his normal suit and drew the wire gun from his ankles. He aimed for the innermost mobile suit hangar on the starboard and squeezed the trigger.

There was a slim machine silhouette as he was dragged by the wire gun that was rolling back. That was the MSN-001A1 “Delta Plus”. It was a test transformable mobile suit left behind in Anaheim’s warehouse, one that had no definite production standard, and this was the mobile suit Riddhe was newly assigned to. He originally wanted to pilot the “ReZEL” he was already used to, but he had to rely on this mobile suit this one. It was a test mobile suit from out of nowhere, and though there was a chance that the right to pilot it can be transferred to him if he said that he wanted to pilot it, it was lucky that it was handed over to him. Riddhe looked up at the deep grey mobile suit on the hangar, looked around at how the mechanics were looking, took a deep breath, and floated there.

The half-wrecked “ReZEL” unit 008 was moved to the factory block, and Mechanical Officer Gibney and the mechanics of unit 008 were taking care of this “Delta Plus”. “We can’t use any of the “ReZEL”s spare parts. Pull out all the spare equipment from the storage!” Riddhe heard Gibney’s growl as he turned to look at the narrow catwalk behind the hangar. As expected, the mechanics were handing out manuals and looking, not in the mood to be distracted elsewhere. *They’re able to get to work now, right…*

(Romeo 009 and Juliet 5, launch with the second wave of ECOAS members. Once you get to the standby area, wait for the 3rd phase of the operation to begin. Romeos 008, 010 and 011, launch out as well. Cover the ship directly to prevent unexpected situations.)

Mihiro’s tense voice echoed through the deck. At that moment, the whistling of the hydraulic drive and the metallic parts rumbling could be heard as Riddhe looked at the helicopter leading to the catapult deck. The ECOAS’ transformable mobile suit got up from the flat armored

car in its tank form, and was lifted up by an ugly machine. The tank that was at least two sizes smaller than the “ReZEL” crawled over there like a baby learning how to walk, and the machine that left the hangar was the “Jegan” codenamed Juliet 5. This special specs mobile suit had 3 rapid-fire missile launchers on both shoulders, and had a booster unit on the back as an optional unit. It was a heavily armed version dubbed the “Complete Jegan”. The waist and legs were also equipped with additional armor onto its already bulky body. On the other end, the reports of crew leaving the ship caused the wireless communicator to get even noisier, and the linear activation shooting out from the catapult belts shook the air in the hangar slightly. The “ReZEL” Romeo 009, acting as the first to launch, transformed into a waver rider as it left the ship—and it was probably acting as the tank mover that was leaving the ship too.

Juliet 5 and Romeo 009 launched out first as they escorted ECOAS, while the “Delta Plus” and two “ReZELs” were to act as direct cover for the “Nahel Argama”. These were the operation priorities Riddhe and the mobile suits were assigned to in this raid on “Palau” called “Operation Billiard”. It seemed like a strategy formed by quick wits in order to make up for their lack of fighting strength, but if they could move on successfully, they would be able to shut off the counterattack by Neo Zeon. For Riddhe’s ‘side’, this plan had to succeed no matter what. He watched the “Complete Jegan” get moved up the lift, and looked back at the catwalk, seeing a petite figure in normal suit there.

Despite the fact that her helmet visor was pulled down, Riddhe knew that it was ‘her’ from how she did not look like she fitted in. He felt relieved that she managed to make it to this place safely as he randomly raised his hand, making a hand signal to the petite person in normal suit, seemingly remaining still there. He climbed up the hangar platform, and was about to check on what the mechanics were doing, “So you came, the guy who went and returned back.” only to hear a gruff voice shot at him.

Gibney held onto the large spanner in his hand like he was holding onto a metal rod, baring his teeth as he grinned and looked at the ceiling. *Did he find out?* He suppressed his racing heart as he looked at the platform, only to find that there was no sight of ‘her’, and could only stare at the upper body of the “Delta Plus” standing there silently. Gibney stared at Riddhe who looked like he did not know what was going on, “Look at the shoulders, the shoulders.” and said with a hoarse voice.

The “R008” was spray-painted on the shoulder armor behind the wrists and the booster unit. “They said you’re going to ride on it. This is the

codename of glory for the only one from the “Nahel Argama” who wasn’t shot down.” Gibney said as he gave an earnest smile not seen before, waiting for Riddhe’s response. Riddhe did not really have feelings about the machine’s serial number, but he courteously smiled and answered, “Well, to put it, I’m really grateful.” Gibney chuckled heartily and put his arm around Riddhe’s shoulders.

“We did what we can help you with, but the control system is so sensitive is scary. The thruster push isn’t something the “ReZEL” can match. You’ll get hurt if you think it’s just like normal. Be careful.”

“In other words, it’s a ferocious horse?” Riddhe answered as he looked at the catwalk, “That’s how it is.” Gibney ignored this reply as he patted Riddhe on the back. Riddhe stared at the petite figure in the normal suit floating over from the handrail, and none of the mechanics around him noticed—

“Sorry to let you go out there with a machine you’re unfamiliar with.”

“I returned back after a detour out anyway. It’s a miracle that I can launch.”

“You sure can talk, don’t you, brat.” Gibney rubbed the bottom of his nose and turned his extremely grateful expression away from Riddhe. “You barely managed to escape, and yet came back again. You really become an independent man.”

I want to live and die together with this ship… the mechanical officer’s voice sounded like he thoroughly believed Riddhe’s voice. It could not be helped that Riddhe felt hurt by it, but at this point, he could not cancel the plan like this. He moved away from the gentle Gibney and said, “Then, mechanical officer, can I just remain like this before I launch?” before looking over at him.

“Eh?”

“Because I want to have time with my beloved machine.”

He took out the biplane model from the bag on his belt, and Gibney snorted as he showed a wry expression on his face. “At such a moment again? You really like that thing, don’t you?” He tapped Riddhe’s helmet and shouted to his subordinates, “OI!”

“HIS HIGHNESS THE ENSIGN IS GOING INTO ZEN MODE BEFORE LAUNCH. GET ON STANDBY, EVERYONE!”

The demonic NCO yelled out, and the mechanics left the machine. Riddhe used the moment Gibney turned around to give ‘her’ a signal. The petite figure in the normal suit stepped on the head of the

Gundam-type mobile suit “Delta Plus” that was without horns, and quickly slid into the cockpit. Riddhe checked that no one else was on board and intended to follow in. But…

“WAIT A SEC!”

Gibney’s roar echoed through the deck, and Riddhe was unable to move his body as his hand was on the cockpit hatch. He looked around in a terrified manner, and met the mechanical officer in the eye as it was unknown when he was looking over.

“Let’s pray for Ensign Riddhe to be successful in battle. Everyone salute!”

On Gibney’s command, the mechanics floating in zero gravity quickly raised their hands to salute. Riddhe saw the passion the mechanics had in their stares from all angles, and he gave a proper salute back to them before sneaking into the cockpit with a heartaching feeling. He finally stared at Gibney’s slightly bloodshot eyes and closed the hatch.

The back of the hatch that was closed became a screen, completing the all-view monitor that had already been activated. Riddhe could not relax even if he wanted to, and wiped off the sweat on his forehead first before calling behind, “No need to worry now. You can take off the helmet.” The person hiding behind the linear seat poked her head out and opened the helmet visor. Mineva Lao Zabi’s white tender face entered Riddhe’s eyes, and he found himself starting to tremble at this point.

It had been more than 6 hours since they finally managed to get back onto the “Nahel Argama”. Riddhe managed to convince the Captain who was guilty for making him write unnecessary letters, and as he was going through the usual procedures in getting back to the mobile suit squad, Mineva was hiding at the bottom of the launch, waiting for the time to go out. Both of them managed to last through the guards’ inspections, but they never had a chance to meet each other after there. In the end, she ended up floating around the ship alone. they already planned a detailed schedule, and he did hand her a path to move along in the ship, but it was nearly a miracle that she managed to reach this place without anyone’s detection. Normally, even if her legs did not weaken, she might had gotten lost on the way, move down a suspicious path, and could have been questioned.

Speaking of which, there was no reason for the two of them to meet at this place not for this level of guts she had. The emerald eyes looked rather calm by the side as Riddhe removed a monitor panel beside the seat and pulled out an assistance seat for training. Mineva took off her

helmet and said silently, “Is this alright?”

Gibney and the rest were moving over to their standby areas right in front of their eyes. Riddhe carried the pain that had not subsided in him and shrugged.

“It’s a lie if I say that it’s not a huge problem, but I have no choice. I can’t create a chance for you to leave if I don’t do this.”

“What about Mr Takuya and Miss Micott?”

“Don’t worry. Mihiro will take care of them. The basic plan in this battle is a hit and run, so the chances of the ship being caught in battle aren’t high.”

Riddhe patted the assistance seat as he finished the setup, and added, “Though we need something to be successful.” Mineva sat on it with a complicated expression and gave a probing look over, “You’ll only attack military facilities, right?”

“Logically that should be the case. It seems that there’s a spy from the Intelligence Branch inside “Palau”, so the operation is made knowing where the objects are and the factory schedules. We won’t do anything that will cause the residence block to get damaged.”

After saying that, Riddhe remembered who he was talking to. “You’re concerned after all, aren’t you?” Mineva answered the curious Riddhe with an unhappy face, “The Superintendent of “Palau” is a man is someone who only cares for benefits to himself at all costs.”

“But the residents have no relations to him. I can’t tolerate it if this operation will hurt the residents of “Palau”. Even if I have to rob this mobile suit, I want to go back to tell them.”

Mineva’s eyes looked like she would really this. Riddhe looked away from the pressuring eyes on him and deliberately consciously let out a relaxed voice as he sat on the linear seat, “Don’t show such a scary expression.”

“I’m risking my life here as well. I might even end up facing the firing squad if I mess up here, you know?”

Mineva hid her speechless expression as she remained silent. That expression was like a youth who did not know how to suppress his emotions. He recalled that she was able to say astounding things in the face of adults, and was yet able to show her inner self so directly it was surprising. Riddhe understood that this was an inexplicable girl he was facing, felt a mysterious sensation rising in his chest, and clicked his tongue inside his heart. He looked away from the side of Mineva’s

face, and deliberately spoke with a self-defeat tone, “Well, we made it all the way here, so it’s pointless to even worry now. Just help us pray that this good luck will continue.”

“Good luck?”

“Including how we managed to make it all the way here, our luck here also includes the coincidence of how the operation would begin when that place is closest to Earth and this “Delta Plus”. This guy here can break through the atmosphere without any optional parts. I won’t be able to think of such a reckless plan if this machine wasn’t moved here. I don’t know whether the luck is yours or mine, but anyway, we’re very lucky here.”

I’m half-saying this to myself. Riddhe shut his mouth after saying this. Even though they could keep up this momentum and make it all the way to their destination successfully, there was no solid proof that things would develop just as they hoped for. Riddhe too felt repulsed by the fact that he had to rely on the ‘family’ he had hiding from at this point, but there was no other way. They could only proceed on by believing in their own luck. *Even if I’ll be slandered as a traitor, I have to fulfill my duty and responsibility as someone present*— Riddhe wiped away the sweat that flowed out again and grabbed onto the control stick like he was ready for anything. He checked the energy gain value that was higher than that of the “ReZEL”s, and saw that the attachments were removed. “I understand.” Mineva’s voice rang suddenly.

“I’ll believe. Believe in my luck and your courage.”

She was seated on the assistance seat slightly behind, on the right side of the linear seat, her emerald eyes smiling back at him. As his heart skipped a beat (Romeo 008, please head to the catapult deck.) Mihiro’s voice rang. Riddhe answered “Roger that.” and looked forward. He slowly stepped on the pedal and said briefly, “We’re going. Put on the helmet.” Mineva did not look concerned by how Riddhe was looking away from her unnaturally as she wordlessly put on the helmet.

Riddhe raised the right mechanical arm lightly to bid farewell to Gibney and the rest, and put the personalized shield fastened beside the hangar on the machine’s left hand. He drew the personal beam rifle from the wall’s equipment, and let the machine with its weight increased at that moment move off, leaving the “Nahel Argama”s mobile suit deck he probably would not be returning to. He let the lift carry him onto the catapult deck, and the first catapult that formed the bow of the ship appeared right in front of him. As the shutter opened, the guiding lights on the other end light up the catapult headed into

space. At this point, they looked like pyres for those who would never return.

“Once we see that the third phase is successful, I’ll leave the frontlines. As long as the operation is successful, we won’t have to fight against the enemy units. Maybe our units will pursue us, but with this guy’s acceleration, it’s easy to shake them off. Then, we’ll head straight for our destination.”

I’m getting ready to do something stupid. Riddhe suppressed the timidity that was rising up in his mind as he said. “Yes.” Mineva responded.

“Even if it’s the closest point to Earth, it’ll take at least two days to reach Earth. Water and food’s prepared, but you better get ready.”

“I don’t mind. Go ahead.”

Mineva curled herself in this narrow assistance seat for instructions, and showed a look that she was already prepared. Riddhe glanced behind at those widened emerald eyes, thought that she was really beautiful again, and shook his head to look forward at the space in front of him.

We can’t relax here. She’s an important person of Neo Zeon, our enemy. She’s also the crux to this incident, the existence that can stop this chaos. That’s why I decide to save her—to expose the truth of how the Federation intended to bury everything under the table and avenge the souls of those dead men. People might say this is an immature sense of justice, but I’m in a situation where I can do all these. I have something I have to do—didn’t Squad Leader Norm say this? This is the responsibility I’m tasked with for being the sole survivor. This is a duty I have to fulfill as someone present. It has nothing to do with any personal feelings I have for her…

(Romeo 008, catapult equipped. Get ready to launch.)

Mihiro’s broadcast voice rang in Riddhe’s ears, pulling his wavering consciousness. He was about to reply “understood”, only to notice that the wireless communicator was switched to another channel.

(Good luck, Ensign Riddhe. I haven’t forgotten the promise to watch a movie.)

Even though it was through the visor, Mihiro’s eyes on the communication window were giving off a slight heat. Riddhe immediately remembered the positioning of the camera and realized that Mineva was not on her monitor. He felt a bitter sense of betrayal in

his mouth as he said vaguely, “Understood.” And stared at the round eyes that were like a small animal.

“…It’ll definitely happen one day.”

Eh? Mineva frowned, but RIddhe did not look at it any further. He held onto the control stick and raised his voice to remove all regret,

“Riddhe Marcenas, Romeo 008. “Delta Plus”. Launching!”

The countdown timer showed zero, and the linear propelled catapult was shot out as the G-force rose out of a sudden, striking his body. The portside catapult that was severely damaged passed by his eyes at that moment, and as the machine was about to reach the end of the runway, the “Delta Plus” shot out flares from its thruster jets and leaped off the catapult. The thick grey machine floated towards the void.

“I’m going to test the transformation. Hang on.”

The capabilities would decide whether the plan would succeed. Riddhe executed the transformation without waiting for Mineva’s reply. The torso popped up, covering the head, the legs that were foldable extended out left and right, and the binders on the back bended by 90 degrees, forming the machine’s wings. The shield that was below the machine became the bow of this streamlined version.

This thing was basically not much different from the “ReZEL” Waverider. However, this machine that managed to complete its transformation within several milliseconds had a volume reminiscent of a fighter jet in the atmosphere, and the visual sharpness was not something the “ReZEL” could match. The main wings on both left and right side were just like a winged machine, and even the side flaps used for flight control had designs on them. Riddhe checked the locations of the two “ReZELs” that left the machine first as he stepped on the pedal lighting. The unexpected amount of G-force struck his body, and the body of the “Nahel Argama” faded away at that moment. A chill struck his body, and his organs felt like they dropped below his navel.

“Amazing…!”

The thrusters still have power. Can I really pilot this overly picky machine? at that moment, Riddhe felt anxious. (008, you're moving too far in front. Don't break the defensive formation.) he heard an allied pilot growl, and hurriedly transformed the machine back into the mobile suit form. He cut off the sending signals of the communicator as he looked behind and asked "Are you alright?" The assistance seat had none of the G-force resistance the linear seat had. Mineva was slumped heavily into the assistance seat as she said,

"It's alright. Don't mind me."

Her abdomen looked like it was rising and dropping in a painful manner, Mineva said that with her eyes widened. That fearless voice caused Riddhe to feel the pressure in his chest rising, and he wordlessly looked forward.

There were still no signs of the "Palau" amidst the vacuum as the debris floated around wildly. *We should be around the security zone. Are the mobile suits that launched first are okay? Have the ECOAS group hiding in "Palau" finished their job as planned? If any factor gets*

messed up, our plan will also be doomed. Riddhe shook away the countless factors of failures in his mind as he stared at the digital clock that was set in Greenwich Time. 17.44. The climax of this 3rd phase of "Operation Billiard" is about to begin, and the time left is—

Part 11[edit]

10 minutes later, at 17.54, the last member passed through the hatch, and the door of the "Loto" infantry transport room was closed up.

"Team Omega's retreat is complete. None of the fireworks were changed."

The vice commander seated at the front reported. It was 40 seconds earlier than predicted, but there was no time to be relieved over everyone's safe return as Nasri ordered, "Right, send a signal to the "Nahel Argama"."

"Once it's sent, we'll leave the current location. We'll then rendezvous with the mobile suit squad on the "Nahel Argama" and cover 920's entry."

The pilot at the control seat pulled the joystick down in cadence with the repeated voice. The "Loto" hidden under the shadow of the rocks stood up, and the legs with the caterpillar belts crushed stepped onto the rocky surface. Nasri checked that their allied machine has left, and turned the periscope over to the space where the "Palau" was. He could only see the transport ships coming and going, and could not see any thruster flares that indicated an enemy ship. Space was silent, but they sent out a wireless signal, so it was best to think that it was a matter a time before the enemy discovered them. The time at this point was 17.55, and there were 5 minutes before the main event of "Operation Billiard" began. The long 5 minutes that were hard to endure would match the 2 hours before as it bgan.

"It's not often that we can see such a show in this Celestial Sphere. Don't you dare miss, "Nahel Argama"."

Nasri looked at the shafts linking the Asteroids to each other as he mused in his dry mouth. Several Gaza machines left the surface, causing Nasri to wonder if they were moving because they detected an abnormal electric wave.

Part 12[edit]

"ECOAS 729 called in. The Object Ball has been placed."

One could tell from Ensign Mihiro's tense voice that she did not have time to feel relieved over the end of the second phase. Object ball—

their positions were set. There was no backing out from this competition. They had to quickly release the cue and let the cue ball hit the gathered targets. “Alright!” Otto let out a voice that echoed through the bridge, and used this momentum to pause his thoughts. He picked up the ship’s phone from the Captain’s seat armrest and pressed on the button to broadcast to the entire ship.

“This is the Captain notifying all hands. We’ll begin the 3rd phase of the operation. At this moment, our ship will rush into enemy space and attack their base with the hyper mega-particle cannon.”

First Officer Liam, who was seated at the console in front together with the cannon operator and the navigation officer, gave a tense glance at Otto. The sensor operator was sitting at the left console, and Ensign Mihiro was on the right. The second communication room was left to Operator Bellard for him to contact ECOAS and pass the information. The often-empty commander’s seat beside the Captain’s seat was occupied by Alberto, and this observer’s unreliable face was all pale, but nobody in the ship had time and will to send him to the safe living quarters for safety. Otto ignored Alberto, who swallowed his saliva hard, and said,

“As everyone knows, we need all the power on the ship to fill the hyper mega-particle cannon. Our ship will now head towards the enemy watchzone at the fastest speed possible, but we’ll have to rely on inertia once we start loading. We won’t be able to turn and adjust ourselves, and the main and side cannons can’t be used. We can only use the ship’s navigation speed to break through the enemy’s perimeter.”

In other words, once they rushed out, they would not be able to stop. They had to barge into the firing zone with such restrained conditions and fire the hyper mega-particle cannon at the target. They had to break through the enemy’s ranks until the ship’s power was regained. Otto heard the sighs of the crew members that amounted to more than a hundred for himself and emphasized, “This is a dangerous gamble.”

“However, the success of this operation will depend on this hit. I hope every crew member can rise up to the challenge.”

He put down the ship’s phone and stared at everyone’s faces on the bridge. It was impossible to see the crew’s expressions as they were covered by the normal suits’ helmets, but Otto felt the weight of the life in each individual body more than ever. He took in the last mouth of breath he could take and finally gave the order, “All hands, check the airlocks.” and closed the visor of his helmet.

“All hands, accelerate defensed. Proceed at high speeds.”

Soon after the command was repeated countless times, the trembling of the machines was amplified, and the ship itself shook with a rattling voice. 10 thruster nozzles let out flares at the same time, and the 400m long giant ship let out an impact from the inside. The “Nahel Argama” was starting to accelerate. Otto held onto the armrests tightly as he stared at the navigation screen in front of him.

The stars that were on the bridge windows did not move. Nothing could prove that the ship was accelerating other than the speedometer, but the G-force striking from the front increased its pressure regularly, causing the sweat under Otto’s armpits to flow towards the back. They started from the ‘safe driving’ of 1km per minute, and gradually accelerated such that it went down to 50 seconds, 40, 30. Once it reached the 30 second mark, the G force on the bodies exceeded 3G, and the skin on the faces were rattling.

The body that had the weight of the normal suit added on felt like a lead block, and he could not lean on the backrest. His arms felt heavy, like they were being pulled down by something, and if he relaxed, it seemed like the force would strike through the armrests fully. Otto continued to stare at the navigation screen as he heard the groans from the opened wireless communicator inside the ship. Soon, they would reach their fastest speed—3km per second as the ship accelerated by the minute.

The ship let out a rattling sound, and the continuous acceleration monitor let out a warning light. The minute space dust hitting it would let out a sandstorm-like sound inside the ship. The G-force on the body exceeded 6G. The “Nahel Argama”, escorted by three machines bore the G-force that was equivalent to that of leaving the atmosphere, and it passed through the shoal space region like a rocket. (We’re about to reach the enemy watchzone.) (Minovsky particles, scattered to battle situation density). Otto heard Liam and the rest let out reports that sounded like groans through the wireless communicator, saw that the value on the acceleration monitor was already what they planned, and shouted with all his strength, “HYPER MEGA-PARTICLE CANNON, READY TO FIRE!”

The vibrations of the engine faded away quickly, and the G-force that were pressing down on the body was weakening. (Coordinates stabilized, designated as the target instructed by the ship) (Engines stopped, proceeding by inertia. Focusing all power to the hyper mega-particle cannon!) (All hands, switch to the backup power). The voices rang and disappeared through the wireless communicator, and the

lights in the bridge were switched to the red light of the backup power. This time, an impact from the back struck everyone. As the acceleration ended, the G-force on the bodies became zero, and the bodies that were released from intense pressure bent forward.

The thrusters stopped, and the ship that lost the propelled power flew in space by inertia. The real danger began at this point. The sounds of the ship's rattling was fading gradually, but the sounds of minute debris was still pinging on the ship's external armor. The air sac of the normal suits crumpled, and the Otto felt an itchy feeling in his lower body during to blood circulation flowing into his numb parts. He held his breath and stared at the sensor visual.

The navigation path was designed by comparing the latest space maps, but it was possible for the debris flying over to obstruct their way. The effective range of their sensors was reduced to a range of about 20km radius at this point as they had scattered Minovsky Particles. All signs of debris in the way would collide directly into the "Nahel Argama" within milliseconds…

Suddenly, a black shadow grazed past their sights, causing the sweat on Otto's back to freeze. A small white light flickering outside the window as an allied machine diagonally in front of them—Ensign Riddhe's "Delta Plus" was telling everyone that it was carrying out adjustments. The irregular debris floating in from the space outside seemed to graze past something not too far away from the ship as it flew behind. (Hii…) Mihiro let out a weak shriek a second later as the debris floated away from the sensor's range.

(This is too reckless…)

Alberto moaned with his hands covering his head. *Who do you think was the cause behind this?* Otto suppressed the urge to let out this voice from his throat and his body felt the engine rumble again. (The anti-air Gatling guns can still work, shoot down the irregular rocks!) The sound of the hyper mega-particle cannon gathering power overpowered Liam's growl as it got louder and louder. The large monster sucked up all the power the "Nahel Argama" generated and rumbled. The 50m long large cannon poking out from the hull of the ship spread the melody of the power generated and gathered through the ship.

17.59. The time schedule was going at a difference of 5 seconds. At this point, they could only leave their luck to Heaven. Otto saw the spot of light on "Palau" on the screen and exerted strength in his hands resting on the armrests. They would shoot the fireworks ECOAS 729 set up at the Pyramid Spot on the rhombus at 18.00. There were 3

seconds left, 2, 1…

Part 13[edit]

0. Universal Century 0096, April 12th, 18.00 sharp.

Not a lot of vehicles were moving through the connecting shafts of “Palau” at this time. The factories had three work shifts through 24 hours, and the job shift for night duty ended 2 hours ago. The people working in the morning shift had returned home, and the people working during the night shift were still in dreamland. Thus, not many linear cars were in operation. As for what would be moving along this long and wide tube-like tunnel, that would be the linear cars without anyone in them, ferrying the mined rocks or trucks sending food and daily necessities. Including them, there were still less than 20 vehicles moving on a shaft.

Suddenly, an intense tremor spread inside the tunnel. The booming noise blew up the highway that was 3km long. The ferrying trucks present hurriedly stepped on the brakes and brought the vehicles to the road shoulders. There was no gravity within the connecting shafts, but the tires’ magnetism on the ground made the vehicles feel no different from a gravity block. *Did a meteor strike?* The truck driver floated out from the driver seat and intended to land on the ground with his magnetic soles. However, he floated in the air like this, and heard a second explosion.

The magnetism isn’t working. Is it a power outage? He did not even have the time to think as the lights in the tunnel went out and changed to a red light. At the same time, there was a flash expanding right in front of him, and a storm blew through the wide tube. The truck driver was blown away by the wind, and was soon knocked 50m away. His back slammed into the partition shutter that was activated, was knocked unconscious because of this impact, and remained asleep for the next three hours without knowing anything until the firemen arrived at the scene to wake him up once everything ended.

The ‘fireworks’ ECOAS planted were exploded. They timed this moment where traffic flow was at its minimum and blew up the areas near the connecting shafts with SHMX, creating the expected destructive outcome on the connecting shafts. The supersonic explosion winds were compressed into a shockwave, and a fatal fissure was caused by the explosion spread while the generators on the other side of the shafts showed deep cracks. The energy from the explosions multiplied without any wastage, causing the cracks outside the shafts to form breaks. The cracks letting out gas and flames instantly expanded. They expanded to form a round around the 30m

diameter shafts, and all 10 of them ended up being severed like they were sliced at the waste.

The unmanned linear car carrying the mined rocks made an emergency stop, and emergency partition walls were lowered before and after the breaks. Fires spurted out from the broken areas, and numerous lights lit the joints of the 4 asteroids. However, it was just a poke of a needle at the stomach of “Palau”. The trajectory of the large asteroids would not change as long as nuclear weapons were not used. Of course, there was no major obstruction to the main part “Calyx”, and even the 3 “Corollas” were not affected. The “Palau” continued to remain floating in the shoal space region just like how it was before the explosion, but all connecting shafts were severed, and the 4 asteroids could be said to be separated from each other—this was the first time in the history of “Palau” that the 4 asteroids were separated from each other, and only managed to maintain the usual “Palau” shape. However, there was no time to check on what happened here as a second incident struck “Palau”.

Two unknown machines entered the watchzone at the same time as the explosion. More accurately, there were 3 machines. A “ReZEL” transformed into its Waverider form, an ECOAS 920 “Loto” riding on the back, and there seemed to be a third heat source sighted on the radar—but there was electronic interference after that, which made further observations impossible. The “Nahel Argama” followed the advance squad and entered the watchzone, scattering Minovsky Particles that caused this interference.

Multiple unknown machines started moving towards “Palau” at the moment there were explosions in many areas. This was undoubtedly an attack, and 4 “Geara Zulus” were launched hurriedly from the military port ‘cove’. They had an “Eye Zack” checking where the enemy was attacking, the mobile suits located at the alert sites left the surface, and the many “Gaza Ds” set a perimeter around the ‘cove’. The defense squad that detected an abnormal electric pulse from “Palau” believed that the enemy had already snuck into their camp. The alert sites lights were moving around, and a “Gaza D” pilot searching “Palau”s surface caught sight of a deep brown machine hiding in a crater.

It had a rock-like color scheme on it, but it could not evade detection under close range. The “Gaza D” pilot detected the “Loto”s heat source and pursued the attack as it transformed. The hook-like hands turned around from the stand it was like, and the body in the shape of a cannon grew a pair of hands. Despite having an arthopod-like silhouette that was dubbed ‘an alien transport’, the mobility “Gaza D” in

mobile suit form was not something the “Loto” could match. The “Loto” fired its Gatling cannons on the shoulders wildly, using the weak verniers to move back, and the “Gaza D” pilot charged right over at its enemy.

At that moment, another shot came from another direction, hitting the “Gaza D” directly. The “Gaza D” had no chance of drawing the beam saber from its shoulder binders as it was sliced in half at the waist, and the weak machine frame blew up under the expanding fireball. The other “Loto” fired a 120mm low recoil cannon from behind the rock—and Squad Leader Nasri Razal “Loto” rushed out from the rock after checking that the enemy was shot down, and let its humanoid body with thick Gatling cannons on its shoulders hide in the next hiding spot.

The landscape of “Palau” was saved into their database, and they would not make the simple mistake of letting themselves get caught by the enemy so easily even if it were enemy territory. ECOAS specialty was concealment. Nasri checked that the allied unit acting as bait started to move, and proceeded on to find the next prey. They wanted to use this method to shoot down as many enemies as they could in this manner and support Daguza and his ECOAS 920 squad members in their assault. In order to break into “Palau” and go through lots of effort to save the capture civilian, they had to create a commotion as obvious as possible and gather the enemy’s sights on them. There were only a few seconds until the main event of “Operation Billiards”—the firing of the hyper mega-particle cannon. Nasri saw the large number of enemies rushing out from the ‘cove’ through the periscope, and gave a numb-looking smile on his lips.

There would be an assault after the destruction, and a ring of exploding light indicating that their allied machine was shot down came after. “Palau” descended into sudden chaos, but it would be later that the people in the large round tubes between “Calyx”—the inner walls of the shield machine knew about this. The explosion of the connecting shafts merely sounded like thunder to them from afar, and they could not experience the tremors for themselves. The resident blocks on both sides were about to have the usual sunset, and the only thing ringing dully was the sirens mixed with the winds, indicating an abnormal situation.

In the center Uppertown, Pepe was in his official residence near the governor’s estate, and got on the leather chair the moment he heard the siren. Full Frontal asked to break off ties with him on his side, and to him, who was about to go mad, who was able to negotiate with people in the related worlds, that siren sounded like it was the declaration of destruction. On the other side, in the Downtown area,

Tikva kicked over the dining chair and ran out of the house while ignoring his mother's attempt to stop him.

His father, Marida and the Captain returned to the ship because it was said that there was an emergency order. Banagher too disappeared after he went out. *There's no reason for him to escape*— the Captain said so, and Tikva did not feel that the immature prisoner had such courage, but the sound of the siren sounded abnormally heavy, causing his chest to flutter. Quite a few people felt the same too, and they looked up at the artificial sun that disappeared, praying to God that their relatives in the Neo Zeon Army could remain safe.

Banagher did not have this luxury. He walked out from the subway at the military facility 'cove', moved through the zero gravity path, and ended up feeling the tremors of the explosion closer than Tikva and the rest.

DUN. A deep noise echoed through the path devoid of anyone else, and the siren could be heard after that. This path that was recorded on the monitor sheet map was a service route that was used by the guards at the excavation fields. It was connected to all the tunnels like a net, and ordinary people would be prohibited from entering this 'cove'. Banagher compared the area code on the wall with the monitor sheet to see where he was, and had a premonition that caused him to panic in the midst of the aftershock. It was 6pm, the time the 'receivers' would arrive—

"It started…"

It was the Federation's attack. There was no other guesses as Banagher hastened his speed up the liftgrip. He did not head towards the 14th spacegate he was told to head to, but went to the 'cove' Neo Zeon fleet base. The attack started, and his plan might be something unnecessary, but he could only continue on. Whether he could succeed or not, there was no other way to bring the residents of "Palau" away from the battlefield. He looked forward while hearing the sirens annoy his nerves like they were prompting him. This was just a premonition that things were beginning, and the hands holding onto the liftgrip were sweating.

Part 14[edit]

Numerous light spots appeared on the asteroid joints, and the flashes merely remained for a moment. The gas left over from the explosions floated to the shadows of the asteroids and could not be observed. The main screen show that "Palau" looked just like usual.

(We've sighted an explosion of light at "Palau"s connecting shafts!)

(Hyper mega-particle cannon, loading rate is 120%. Preparations to fire are complete.)

The cannon operator's voice quickly passed through the wireless communicator right after the sensor operator. Otto got up from the Captain seat and stared at the "Palau" that was optically corrected. There were three fat rock blocks "Carollas" gathered around the bow shaped "Calyx"—and since ECOAS had already cut off all the connecting shafts, those were 4 blocks of rocks sticking to each other through inertia. In that case, the object balls were lined up, and they just needed to use the cue to fire the cue ball and knock down all the target baclls lined up in a rhombus.

We must hit the vital spot in one hit. Otto told himself silently in his heart as he seemingly gathered his courage. But at this moment…

(High heat sources approach! Two of them. Mobile suits.)

The sensor operator's voice caused Otto's order to remain stuck at his throat. *Why at this moment?* He looked at the sensor monitor and stared at the indicated unknown targets. 4 mobile suits were launched from "Palau" and two of them passed through their mobile suit advanced squad and moved close to this point. The "Nahel Argama" itself was moving at a high speed, so both sides were closing in on each other at an alarming rate. The target was right in front of them, and this battleship could not dodge or fire as it approached undefended.

It was a thought that happened in less than a second. (Let the cover intercept…) Otto interrupted Liam's words that were about to come out "LEAVE THEM ALONE!" and yelled.

"GET OUR ALLIES OUT OF THE WAY! HYPER MEGA-PARTICLE CANNON, BEGIN THE ATTACK!"

To heck with them. Otto ignored Alberto, who was looking over at him in surprise, and slumped himself tightly onto the Captain's seat. The voices repeating the command rang, and as all their allied mechas were out of the range, (Ready…FIRE!) the cannon operator's voice rang inside his helmet.

At that moment, the 400m long ship trembled, rocking the bridge. The flash dashed past the window as it went off to the other end, and even the anti-glare filter could not reduce the intensity of this powerful light that covered Otto's sights.

Part 15[edit]

At its critical stage, the large mega-particle cannon was released from the I-field perimeter; it carried out 8 levels of acceleration and gathering inside the ring, and the particles were fired outs. This scorching beam of light took all the power the “Nahel Argama” had and cut through space, first devouring the two “Geara Zulus” that were closing in on its path.

It was relatively moderate in terms of electrical output, but the mega-particle beam still showed a tendency to expand according to its range and fade off. That was why the “Nahel Argama” rushed into firing range and shot the hyper mega-particle cannon at what could be said to be extremely close range, and the two “Geara Zulus” were right in there, letting the beams rush over in the middle of this distance that was less than 20km away. The enemy units were swallowed by the beam that was as large as them, and one of the “Geara Zulu” that suffered fatality was melted like wax candles in a furnace, while the other mobile suit was 1km away from the beam, but was unable to avoid the shockwave and the scattered particles. That “Geara Zulu”s armor were all ripped off at the same moment the former mobile suit was destroyed, and the shockwave that reached it ripped the frame apart.

As the beam raced out, the other two mobile suits pursuing the “ReZEL” and the “Complete Jegan” suffered similar fates. They took the destructive power of the scattered particles that were as destructive as a normal mega-particle beam from the back, and their devastated machines were blown aside from the shockwave, igniting the core reactor furnaces. The hot fusion energy maintained by the I-field spread out in an explosive manner, the humanoid machines with sleeves decorations on them were broken down into limbs, and the giant beam continued to expand. The beam had these lights decorating the path like flowers, and they were just sparkler firestarters that were meant to be blown up before the beam arrived. The sublight arrow was shot out from the “Nahel Argama” at supersonic speed, causing the tip at the top to hit the “Palau”, scorching the surface of “Carolla A”. This massive energy was enough to rock a small asteroid and cause it to accelerate—the connecting shafts were blown, and the “Corolla A” that was linked to the other asteroids started to leave its fixed orbit as it moved.

And just like how the asteroid was moved over to this point from the Asteroid Belt, the direct hit from the hyper mega-particle cannon brought about a thrust that could match a nuclear pulse engine, causing an asteroid in a corner of “Palau” to be pushed out. This

asteroid slammed into “Corolla B”, dragged a mining factory down as it touched the “Calyx” surface. The impact from “A” caused “B” to move and slam into “C”, and after that, it seemed like “B” moved together with “A” to slam into “Calyx”. The “Calyx” bore the brunt of the 3 asteroids mass and motions as it got knocked off course greatly, causing the tip of the bowhead to tilt mightily.

The broken connecting shafts started to bend at the base, and the collisions caused winds to dance on the surface and into space. The result of the hyper mega-particle cannon cue ball hitting the balls caused the 4 asteroids object balls to crash into each other in a chain reaction, causing the a Celestial-scale billiard performance in the shoal space region. From the outside, the 4 tightly packed asteroids might have moved just by a bit, and the “Palau” that was covered in flying dust did not change its shape. However, this was really an earthshaking thing to the people inside. This was definitely a large earthquake that could have caused the skies to crash down. The earthquake caused the two residential blocks in “Calyx” to tumble violently, and there were cracks on the ‘hill’. The dust accumulated within the inner walls flew up, all the houses’ windows were shattered, and the residents were rolling and tumbling around for several meters. Tikva was no exception as he tumbled on the road due to the rumbling, grabbed onto the outer wall that was shaking slightly, and looked up at the sky. The earthquake boomed through the surroundings echoing through the cylinder of this residence block. *Did the shield machine digging into the ‘hill’ work on its own?* Tikva thought blankly as he stared at this bladed digging tool that was abandoned before he was born and was about to be buried under the oxidized rocks. He vaguely heard the sounds his siblings shrieking and his mother calling his name.

The chandelier came crashing down in the governor’s house, and Pepe hid under the table to avoid danger. The “Palau” residential block was built to take advantage of the hardy ability to withstand the shield machine’s activation, and it was no wonder this governor’s estate that was thoroughly decorated took the greatest damage. Chaos too descended on the excavation field under zero gravity, as there were materials left in the air and baskets hitting the artificial, and pipelines were snapped together with the fissured ground. There was not just one crack on the underground tunnels, and the pale-faced workers were hurriedly trying to escape, but this was not all that could describe the devastated ‘cove’.

Due to the direct hit on the sun, the melted magma-like surface could not fade off easily. The “Corolla A” let out gas as it moved towards the

“Calyx”, causing the gap between the asteroids to be show, and the Neo Zeon fleet stationed there lost their exit. The entire military port was sealed inside the ‘cove’ as a result.

The connecting shafts were severed, and several seconds later, another rock blocked the exit, causing the mobile suit squadrons that were mobilized in this emergency to suffer from having to remain there. Several “Geara Zulus” managed to sneak out of the gap before the exit was sealed, but the “Gaza Cs” that followed were crushed by this tectonic plate, letting out explosions of light in the openings. The military port facilities were not exempt from damage either. The rock bits that scattered due to the impact crushed the oil tankers and the dredge ships, and rain of fire and rubble descended on the factories at the base of the craters. The many factories were crushed and devoured by fire, lighting up the large hole that was gradually becoming sealed from time to time. The moored ships started releasing their restrains one by one, casting aside their supplies that were half loaded as they tried to leave the dock, but still could not get back the rock shutter that accelerated over.

A captain of a Salamis-class patrol ship saw the rock plate closing in from the bridge’s window. The crate that was 5km in diameter and 2km caused the military port at the bottom of the crater to burn and fall, and the term ‘landslide’ alone would not be able to explain it thoroughly. It looked like the sky collapsed on them, and the Salamis-class was devoured by debris inside the cave. We won’t make it—it was too late for the Captain to make this decision as the stalactites supporting the roof bit into the ship, and the crater closing in from the bottom raised the ship. In the face of this rock that was the size of an asteroid, the patrol ship did not even have the tolerance of a fly as the keel supporting the hull were snapped, the crushed bridge tumbled onto the deck, and the heat and flash from the core reactor that ignited rose up. Flames rose out from the tightly knitted rock surfaces, creating a border between the two asteroids that had basically become one.

The deep red color could be seen from above the “Delta Plus” despite it being separated from the cloud of dust. The “Corolla A” took a direct high from the hyper mega-particle cannon, and the surface hot surfaces showed lights of ships and mobile suits appearing twice, thrice, lighting the rubble flying all over the place periodically.

“Did it succeed?”

““Palau”s burning…!”

Riddhe and Mineva saw the red burning surfaces from the cockpit afar, and they could not say anything else. The “Nahel Argama” that was

headed to the same place was using up all its inertia as it went right at “Palau”, they could only rely on the mobile suit squadron acting as direct cover until the functions were restored and they leave the place. Riddhe’s eyes scanned for enemies and found them coming out for the ‘cove’. *I can’t let the battle drag on further. I have to hurry up and hit the enemies that are coming out hard and fast and leave the battlefield as fast as possible—*

For a different reason, Daguza too was feeling anxious. He, who was gradually moving closer to “Palau” earlier than the “Nahel Argama”, caught sight of multiple enemies from the periscope, and ordered the pilot to remove direct contact with the “ReZEL” that acted as its transport. He deduced that the “ReZEL” would not be able to fight freely with the “Loto” on the back.

The “Loto” kept the foldable arms on its back and left the “ReZEL”. The “ReZEL” was like a large shark to the “Loto” as it transformed from Waverider form to mobile suit form, releasing the thruster flares. Multiple Gaza-type mobile suits rushed out from “Palau”, and they should be patrol ships outside the ‘cove’ when the collision happened. Daguza could see from the side that their allied “Complete Jegan” fired a beam rifle to hold off the enemy from closing in, and stared at the “Palau” surface that was located behind the flying rubble.

The connection shafts were severed, and the “Corolla A” took a direct hit from the hyper mega particle cannon. The billiard effect caused “B” and “C” to be knocked aside, creating this impression of “Operation Billiard” to seal the enemy fleet inside the ‘cove’. However, this was just a massive mobilization to cause a misdirection. The success of this mission would hang on whether they could break into Palau and snatch the RX-0 and its pilot. ECOAS 729 moved ahead to shoot down enemy units for them, but there were quite a lot of patrol units. There were mobile suits gradually rising out from the gap of the ‘cove’ that could not be sealed off completely. Despite wrecking their base, it was impossible for every ship to be moored. They had to finish the retrieval of the “Unicorn” and Banagher Links before the enemy ships leave the port, detect this and surround the area.

The pink beams suddenly flashed hitting the flying debris and creating an explosion of light. The enemies were firing intercepting shots at them. The “Loto” had no chance of winning with merely anti-air turrets even if they fired here. The pilot quickly dodged and intended to check on the enemy’s location, “Ignore it!” only to be growled at by Daguza.

“Leave it to the covering machine. Where’s the target signal coming from?”

(We can't detect it. Vice Commander Conroy, who was seated at the front, replied through the wireless communicator. *The transmitter Banagher Links's holding onto can send signals within 20km even with Minovsky particles around. If we can't detect him, does that mean he hasn't arrived at the retrieval point inside "Palau"? Or is there some deviation…* Daguza could only suppress his worst imaginations as he held onto the grip of the periscope again.

The fact that he was not imprisoned was confirmed by the spy's report. If he stayed at the space gate retrieval point, he should be able to avoid getting involved in this damage. What is he doing— sweat of uneasiness continued to seep out of Daguza, and he looked at the landscape of "Palau" that occupied his sights. The "Loto" skillfully managed to avoid the rubble flying over, and quickly closed down its distance with "Palau".

Part 16[edit]

Banagher stared at the ball-point pen drenched in sweat and held it tightly. He had to press the signal switch at the appointed moment. He remembered the words recorded on the monitor sheet and checked his watch. It was 6.07pm, past the designated time.

Since the attack, I can't achieve anything even if I struggle wildly. Shall I activate this transmitter? Banagher pondered for a while, and again decided not to. It's easy to pcik me up, but the Federation's goal is to retrieve the "Laplace Box". Even if I obey the instructions, the operation won't end like this. They'll probably search through "Palau" until they find this mobile suit that is basically the key to opening the "Box"—and will eliminate all obstacles, whether soldiers or civilians.

That's why you and I can't stay here. We have to hurry up and leave "Palau". Banagher looked at a corner of the factory amidst the numerous materials thrown into the air. As the sirens and growls from the mechanics echoed, 'it' stood silently as its body remained in the hangar.

He did not know what caused this earth-reversing-like impact. Banagher heard from the soldiers on the way here that it seemed like the asteroids that were linked together crashed into each other. However, he had no time or need to find out the truth. He was lucky to sneak into the military port facility in the midst of the chaos. The target was removed from the ship and placed in this factory block where he could see it after entering. There was no truth more important than this at this moment. Even the transmitter's issue could be solved once he head outside and activate it.

There's no other way. Banagher told himself this and gave up on thinking. He hid himself amongst the containers, looked around, and waited for the moment to rush out. Smoke was starting to float in, and the soldiers were busy putting out fires and tending to the injured as they went around the factory as they did not notice him. None of them looked over at the white machine that was standing deep within, and it looked like there was a deliberate unnatural void surrounding 'it'. *There's less than 50m left, I can get up there without a wire gun. It feels uneasy not to have the normal suit, but there should be a spare inside the cockpit*—Banagher had this thought as he secretly made his decision to get up there first before doing anything else.

He took a deep breath, kicked the floor and left his hiding place amongst the containers. Banagher stepped on the floating metal frames like he was stepping on stones while crossing water, and floated up diagonally within the large factory. The "Unicorn Gundam" with its lone horn pointed up did not affirm nor deny its master's reckless action, and the eyes hidden under the visor were just looking afar.

Chapter 3[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The red and black magma-like glow was the proof that there was a chain reaction exploding inside the ‘cove’. The pulsating hot red light seeped out from the cracks, causing the boundaries 4 asteroids that crashed together at this point to appear vaguely. The scattering rubble and dust that flew with the wind was dyed a light red because of radiation, and “Palau” looked like it was burning thoroughly from afar.

Several mobile suit were basked under the same radiation light as they flew out from the bottom of the cracks. The monoeyed giants forced their way out from the gaps between the asteroids that crashed into each other in waves, and it would be appropriate to describe them as hellish devils. Nasri caught sight of an old “Geara Doga” from the pilot use periscope and squeezed the trigger of the low recoil cannons. The “Loto” with the 729 logo poked its head out from behind the rocks and fired the 120mm cannons on its shoulders.

A slight tremor passed through the machine, and the shells flew out from the two low recoil cannons. The bullet speed was as slow as a snail when compared to the sublight mega-particle shots, but it was not a problem in this distance of approximately two meters. The winged shells that was also designed to work under atmospheric conditions hit the “Geara Doga” in less than a second and blew up its body above the waist. The “Loto” let out its burner flares to move backwards before the enemy’s forcefully separated upper and lower bodies were devoured by the explosions. “FIRE THE LASER AT THE CRACK!” Nasri shouted without warning as he turned the periscope to the crack.

The laser support designator installed on the “Loto”s head fired an infrared laser. That invisible light was reflected on the crack, forming a reverse-cone shaped beam called a laser cone, and it was used to show the target coordinates to the “Complete Jegan” that flew in from above.

The “Complete Jegan” shot out the anti-ship missiles installed on its shoulder missile launchers, and lit its booster pods on the back above the cracks. Under this close distance and the laser guiding through the optical sensors, the Minovsky Particles could not block the eyes of the missiles. The large missile heads that could even be equipped with nuclear shells flew into the laser cover and hit the tip of the cone—the crack indicating the enemy’s escape hole.

White hot light expanded, and the dirt that was blown apart by the

impact flowed deep into the cracks. The mobile suits that were trying to escape were caught in this torrent of debris, their limbs were crushed as they exploded, and the new impacts blew up the cracked surface. Mobile suits limbs and flames shot out together, forming a burnt furnace at the crack. The absolute zero space surrounded everything at this point, causing the melted and collapsed rock surface to freeze quickly.

With that, the slightly large crack was basically sealed off. *We just have to shoot down all the enemy units that are coming out from the crack*— Nasri glanced at the rocky surface that had frown steam and gas as he looked for the next enemy under the periscope. They managed to seal off the main forces in the 'cove', but they still could not relax. The path leading from the tunnel to the spacegates were not covered, and they had limited ammunitions.

If we miss the timing to leave, we'll be surrounded and unable to move. "Has the 920 sent a signal?" Nasri saw their allied "Loto" moving towards the highest point of "Palau" as he let out this umpteenth prompt. "Unable to confirm." His vice commander answered with an anxious voice, and Nasri nearly cursed out.

It had been 12 minutes since the ECOAS 920 "Loto" fought its way through the 14th space gate. *Hasn't that guy reclaimed the target?* He recalled his old friend showing an emotional face that was different from before, and suddenly felt his stomach hurting. *That most stubborn blockhead in ECOAS kept insisting on saving that target civilian in this operation. He's not a guy who'll make a wrong decision based on personal feelings, but if we want to carry out the mission of retrieving the RX-0, he has to be colder than usual when making decisions on the spot. If the situation requires for it, I may need to fight my way into "Palau" and kick that guy's butt…*

"A large number of enemies appeared at the south side! Coming in fast."

The vice commander let out a sudden voice, causing Nasri's latter thoughts to vanish. It was too early to say that they were enemy reinforcements. He held his breath for just a moment as he saw the large swarm of enemy markers appearing on the sensor range. "FIRE A SIGNAL TO THE "NAHEL ARGAMA"!" He instinctively shouted.

"RETREAT BACK TO "COROLLA". CONFIRM THE NUMBER OF ENEMIES FIRST—"

"They're here!"

The pilot let out a whimper, and the main camera monitor was immediately filled with a white light. The tremor rocked the machine, and the buzzing of the siren filled the control seat. Nasri held onto the grip of the periscope and put his eyes on the eyepiece. The remaining particles of light spread in space, and multiple enemy unit markers overlapped each other. A mobile suit that was right in front appeared on the one-to-one scaled display.

The machine did not have a serial number, only the logo “Sinanju”, and instantly closed in its distance with them. Nasri aimed the low-recoil cannons at the enemy unit and stared at the CG corrected machine image. This machine gave out a red afterimage, flickering its thruster unit that was reminiscent of wings, as it flew over the “Palau” surface to them.

“The red mobile suit…!?”

Nasri let out this doubt from his mouth and squeezed the trigger. The moment the 120mm cannons were shot out, the red machine seemed to vanish from their sights at that instant. *We can’t win. We’ve been had.* This instinct pierced through Nasri’s body, but he did not even have time to think as he immediately moved the periscope to try and catch sight of the enemy. At that moment, the nightvision monitor suffered a blackout, and an impact several times that of before rocked the “Loto”.

The condition monitor showed the “Loto”s CG network, and the cannons on the shoulders were flickering red. The red person got below them and used a beam saber to slice off the low recoil cannons. The AMBAC program could not correct the loss of mass in time, and the “Loto” lost its balance as it crashed onto the rocky several. Short-circuited sparks came out from the pilot seat, and the air bags that were shot out from the console covered Nasri’s head.

“EVADE! BEFORE DAGUZA AND THE REST ESCAPES—”

WE CAN’T LET OURSELVES TO BE FINISHED HERE! In the midst of this tremor where he could have bitten his tongue, Nasri’s voice was immediately swallowed by the heat spurting out wildly from the control seat.

The “Sinanju” swung its beam saber from the “Loto”s shoulder to the flank, vaporizing Nasri and the rest inside the control seat. in the face of the particle beam saber that melted the metal, the 8 ECOAS members kept in the infantry transport room at the back were also vaporizing by their lit normal suits and scattered into space like dust. The “Loto” that was sliced diagonally exploded, and the black corpses

were vaporized cleanly without even a fingertip as the red machine was the only thing at the scene reflecting the light of the explosion.

Part 2[edit]

Angelo knew that the small machine that exploded was the transformable mobile suit the Special Forces used. It was the mobile suit of those guys who stealthily entered the civilian colony and carried out the act of terrorism under the name of counter-terrorism—the Manhunters. He did not feel anything else about this just desserts they suffered as he stared at the “Sinanju” that appeared amidst the explosion before stepping off the landscape of the “Palau” like he was touring around. Full Frontal’s mobile suit lit the light for the counterattack as the red machine flew off to find its next prey.

Wave after wave of “Geara Zulus” wielding beam rifles in their hands let out thruster trails as they followed the “Sinanju”. Angelo felt unhappy that the mobile suit other than those of the escort squads were interfering in Frontal’s battlefield, but it could not be helped as it was a organizational battle. He let his machine shoot out flares from its booster pod and stared at the ships waiting at the back.

The flagship “Rewloola” was at the center, and he could see the Salamis-class patrol ships and the disguised trading ships lined up, causing the ships that were putting out the flames to be covered in darkness. The number of ships that left the ‘cove’ and hid themselves amidst the sea of debris during these past 1,2 days amounted to about 80% of all their forces stationed at “Palau”—in terms of fighting strength, it was 95%. Most of the ships and mobile suits that were sealed inside the ‘cove’ were antiques that were past their usable life, and the soldiers were just a coalition of anti-government forces who had no other place to head to. Those people who came over with the idea of changing directions according to the times were just ‘old blood’ that should be changed. These things were tails that should be changed without pity if they wanted to break off their bond with “Palau” and let the Neo Zeon Army revive for real.

That Federation army that didn’t know this and thought their attack succeeded will now see the real hell. Angelo broke ranks and looked over at the space that had become a battlefield from the southern tip of “Palau”. The rubble and Minovsky particles that were scattered everywhere meant that the motion sensors were practically useless, but they could still catch sight of the enemies within a range of 40km. The enemy units that broke into the “Palau”s anti-air range was a special specs Jegan, a transformable unit with serial number RGZ-95, and also—

“What? They only sent in such few numbers…?”

Angelo moved the unit to the “Corolla A” with the red hot surface. It was impossible to catch sight of the enemy ship’s powerful mega-particle cannon, but it was impossible for the number of units covering the ship to be more than the advanced squad. Even if they counted the Manhunter mobile suits that were hiding on “Palau”, that was still less than ten. He could not ignore the possibility that there were other units waiting to seize the moment, but there was no greater chance than this to send in a large number of forces to the enemy base. Angelo let the machine move through the 3 “Corollas”, inspected the battlefield that was a mess full of anti-air fire, and matched the speed of the “Sinanju” at the “Calyx”. On approaching, the “Sinanju” quickly raised its hand out and held Angelo unit’s hand like it was pulling someone.

“Captain, I can’t estimate the number of forces the enemy has. Even if we consider the strength attacking “Palau”, it’s still too little. There should be a main force hiding elsewhere…”

(They’re aiming for the “Unicorn”. It’s possible to attack with very little forces if they just want to create an opening to reclaim the target. It’s just as expected.)

The voice that came back through the communicator caused the doubts within Angelo to disappear quickly. *That's right, the Federation doesn't have the guts to launch a full-scale battle. This is not beneficial to them. It's because they're surrounded by so many things that they can't move properly, which is why we're going to fight the advanced squad using their own plan as expected.*— Angelo reflected on these words as he spoke to affirm, "Then, has that guy found that Unicorn yet?" Frontal moved the monoeye of the "Sinanju" sharply,

(It begins. We just need to deal with them without wearing out our forces. At the right moment, retreat.)

The voice that felt like it could see through everything rang in Angelo's ears, and the "Sinanju" broke contact before lighting the thruster unit. Angelo sent a laser signal to the escort squad searching for the enemies to order to retreat. He saw the escort squad's units give a hand signal to show that they understood before turning around, opened the slot and stepped on the foot pedal. The wings on the back swayed about like a tail, and the purple "Geara Zulu" raised the beam

launcher to the waist as it got ready to take on the enemy. It accelerated like a bullet.

If that's the case, there's no need to waste time exerting our fighting strength. The Captain and I alone are able to crush these weaklings. Angelo dodged left and right and eyed the specially equipped Jegan as his first target. That heavily armed Jegan that was equipped with large missiles outside the missile launchers floated between the "Calyx" and "Corollas' That was crashed into each other. *It seems that this guy's mission is to fire missiles into the gaps between the asteroids that are the escape holes and seal off the 'cove' completely.*

"Such a cowardly thing to do! You're planning to deal with "Palau" by using a billiard-like trick…!"

Angelo did not want to use long-ranged weapons to get rid of the enemy. He let the machine jump on a rubble, closed in on the Jegan and drew out the beam hook before the opponent could dodge. He suppressed the head of the Jegan as it fired the beam launcher, and let the machine get behind the enemy. The enemy machine turned around with the AMBAC and shot the beam rifle, but the beam could only graze past Angelo's unit head before dissipating in the air. Both sides faced each other, and the beam hook sliced neatly into the Jegan's abdomen.

The part that was equipped with multiple armor was flipped out, and the pilot that was exposed to the high heat was melted together with the cockpit. Angelo then sliced the missile launchers and let his unit leave the scene before the huge fireball was triggered. The surrounding rubble exploded, and with the remnant of the enemy unit vaporizing behind him, Angelo turned to look for the next prey.

"This is to open a way to Neo Zeon's revival. None of you can think of returning back alive…!"

Part 3[edit]

The light expanded through the bridge window, and there was an explosion different from that of a normal mobile suit's explosion. Otto inadvertently got up from the Captain's seat "What's the matter…?" and muttered. (Juliet 5's signal got cut off!) Mihiro's voice rang in his ears.

(There're many enemies appearing from behind. The advanced squad is being surrounded!)

The sensor operator called out, and Otto turned his frozen face to the

main screen in front of him. A large amount of rubble was blown out from the asteroid's collisions, and the motion sensors were basically useless; however, they could use the optical observations to detect the enemy movements. The advanced squad had just gotten close to "Palau", and an unknown large number of mobile suits came moving over from somewhere. Looking at the numbers, it seemed that the number of ships on standby at the back were not just a few. One could tell from this that there were hidden main forces beside the fleet docked at the 'cove'. The main force was in ambush, waiting for the moment because they predicted the attack from here.

Those left inside the 'cove' are just bait. It's a trap. Otto felt this understanding numb his limbs as he raised his volume, "Call the covering forces to back them up!"

“Deploy the anti-air fire. Use the dummy-rubble. Our ship will head straight in. Is there contact with ECOAS?”

(The line got cut. The laser signal too was cut after they got into “Palau”.)

Mihiro transferred the reply from Operator Bellard in the second communication room as she turned her pale face over at Otto. *It’s too slow.* The fake balloon were expanded, and countless fake rubble appeared, but Otto ignored them as he held onto his hands that were covered by the normal suit. *The plan was that there would be contact once they retrieved Banagher Links or the “Unicorn”. Leaving aside the “Unicorn”, it’s weird that they haven’t met Banagher yet. Has he not reached the retrieval point?* Otto checked that it had been 15 minutes since the battle started, and looked at the “Palau” that deployed its anti-air fire, only to frown because of the words he heard (We’ve been had!)

(The “Sleeves” predicted our action and set the trap first. They’re not an opponent we can beat by fighting head on. Captain, hurry up and give the order for our ship to retreat!)

Alberto supported his large body that was slumped into the commander’s seat and continued to say such self-explanatory words as he reached his neck out to Otto. *It seems that he has forgotten that this ship is so reckless because on him. “Our allies are still in a battle. How can we retreat like this!” Otto growled back and looked away from Alberto, never wanting to meet his stare again.*

“There’s a 30 minute time limit in this operation. ECOAS should be contacting us soon. Until then…”

Can we hang on? Otto swallowed the words he was about to say back down his parched throat, and exerted force on the fingertips resting on the armrests. *The engine power’s back to normal. There’s also the option to retrieve all surviving units and escape with maximum speed. If we miss the timing to leave, we might end up in a calamity where we’re annihilated*— Otto stared at the beams that were flashing silently, and as he gritted his teeth, (There’s a new laser signal from “Palau”!) Mihiro’s urgent voice rang through the wireless communicator.

(Is it ECOAS!?) Liam shouted out as she turned to the communication console. (No, this signal is…) From behind, Otto stared at Mihiro, who was stumped for words as she worked on the communication console, and saw a look of surprise on her face as she turned around.

(It's the "Gundam"!)

Part 4[edit]

The flames caused by the explosions at the back ripped apart the cracked surface as it burned wildly. Just before the shockwave could surround the body, and the scorching flames could cover the all-view monitor, the "Unicorn" flew out from the crack and flew into space.

With the burning hot rocky surface at its back, the machine lit its positional burner and dodged the rubble that was still. He had no optional equipment in his program—and randomly took portable weapon from the factory called the Beam Gatling Gun or something—and thus, the AMCAD could not work properly. Banagher tried to correct the program as he stared at the anti-air fire lighting the surroundings of "Palau". The number of beams was less than what he expected. He could vaguely see the lights of battle through the rubble, but the mobile suits in the battle looked too be Neo Zeon units.

"Didn't they bring in a large number of forces…?"

Banagher put on the helmet and pulled down the visor. The normal suit was left inside the cockpit, perhaps because it was investigated to see the synergy with the mobile suit, but it was really lucky of him. Banagher moved the machine behind the rocks and modified the display board. He opened the Identification of Friend or Foe (IFF) window, and could find two units that belonged to the Federation from amidst the rubble and dummies on the window. The two RGZ-95 was surrounded by Neo Zeon machines.

The disadvange the Federation had was obvious even to outsiders. Banagher recalled that there were no real decent ships docked inside the 'cove'. *Does this mean the Federation got ambushed?* He just thought of this, and the siren indicating that a laser signal was received rang. The newly opened window showed the ship Banagher knew and its coordinates.

"The "Nahel Argama"s here too? What's going on…!?"

He could not be mistaken with this signal that was tagged with the mothership. The battleship that was severely damaged and had Audrey and other non-combatants on it would be the one leading the charge in this assault—no, it might seem that this was the only ship sent over from the number of mobile suits that were deployed. Banagher did not feel that this was feasible as he intended to catch sight of the ship's silhouette flying in from the top, but felt a bone-chilling pressure striking him from behind.

His hairs were on its ends as his body started moving on its own to move the machine away. At that moment, a mega-particle came flying down from above, and the countless rubble that came with the explosion rained on the “Unicorn”s back.

The machine left the surface and adjusted its position. Banagher caught sight of the machine that came flying over from amidst the scattered rubble. It was a mobile suit with the AMS-119 machine serial number, a unit of Neo Zeon registered with the name of “Geara Doga”. “Please stop! I have no intent of fighting!” Banagher continued to cry out as he subconsciously worked on the weapons and removed the safety of his portable rifle. The “Unicorn” wielded a long Magnum Gating Gun that replaced the personalized beam rifle that was depleted, and pointed that 4-barreled gun at the “Geara Doga”. The crosshair overlapped on the monoeyed unit that was rushing over, and the alarm indicating lock-on rang.

“LET ME GO! THE FEDERATION WON’T RETREAT IF THEY DON’T RETAKE THE “UNICORN”!”

But even as he shouted, it was impossible for him to tell the enemy pilot this. The glowing monoeye gave a killing intent, and Banagher moved the shield equipped on the left hand to the front. The shield that was automatically deployed from an I-field barrier, twisting the beams the “Geara Doga” shot out from. The scattered beam bullets hit the landscape at his feet, and the rubble that flew and those that mixed with the wind covered the “Unicorn”. Just as the all-view monitor was covered by dust, Banagher sensed the “Geara Doga” moving behind him and pointed the Gatling gun over there. The I-field would not have effect if it was not a beam attack from the front. If he were shot from the side, he would surely be massacred—

“DO YOU FEEL THAT IT’S ALRIGHT EVEN IF YOU TURN “PALAU” INTO A BATTLEFIELD!?”

Banagher yelled and exerted strength on the fingers on the trigger. The 4-barreled gun turned and blew apart the beam shots that were of a higher output than a machine gun. The “Geara Doga” had mega-particles rained on it before it could even adjust itself, and it became a real beehive as its thoroughly battered machine exploded. Banagher inadvertently saw flames shoot out from the arms that were ripped over, looking like it was trying to grab space as it opened its hands.

“Why did it end up like this…!?”

To Banagher, there was no difference between enemy or allies. He just wanted to get rid of the seeds of battle, but caused a new

sacrificed. The uneasy feeling inside his stomach came out in a voice, and Banagher turned his eyes away from the remnant that was instantly vaporized. *You're already a part of it.* Marida's words echoed in Banagher's mind, and the chilly feeling spread on his skin where his hairs stood.

Part 5[edit]

What occupied the sight on the entire view of "Palau" was not a scene of two armies fighting each other toe to toe. There were anti-air fire appearing and lots of explosions, but those were all rubble and dummy balloons, and it was practically impossible to detect mobile suits exploding. The enemy squadrons in ambush showed no signs of moving aside as only two enemy units were moving about enthusiastically, seemingly toying with the "ReZELs" that entered the perimeter. As for the 6 enemy machine silhouettes that were launched, it was unknown if they were launched to sneak the "Nahel Argama" caught on the sensor. The other covering units were sent to support the advanced squad, and the mothership was the only thing left at this point—

Amongst the assumptions he thought of before, this would be considered the worst. Riddhe punched the display board and groaned, "Damn it!"

"We fell right into the enemy's trap…!"

They could not retreat even if they wanted to. Including the ECOAS unit, their side lost three units, and the situation was such that the "Nahel Argama' could not even defend itself on its own. Their plan was to let their machines move forward and create a perimeter against the enemy, but if he move all the way there, he would lose the chance to leave the battlefront in the end, and this understanding caused Riddhe to hesitate on what he should do.

In another sense, there's no better chance to execute the plan than this, but if even the fighting strength of the "Delta Plus" was lost, what will happen to the "Nahel Argama"? A battle isn't decided on a mobile suit such that it can overturn the situation, but if I escape, the chances of the ship's survival will definitely decrease. As a pilot in charge of protecting a military resource, and as a human, this is something I definitely can't allow—but on the other hand, there's something I can do and I have to do right in front of me.

Riddhe's thoughts took a roundabout. The duty and responsibility a person present should have was just a sense of realism that had weight in this ideal, and he could only hold onto the control stick

without aim. “Please go!” This voice came from behind right at the moment the enemy squadrons were scattered to two sides.

“Don’t worry about me. Just fulfill your duty.”

Mineva spoke. This voice seemed to see through everything, “Bu, but…!” and Riddhe was at a loss of words.

“If we try to push ourselves too much here, we won’t be able to reach our destination. It’ll be pointless for us to return back to the “Nahel Argama”.”

Mineva did not say anything else as she merely answered with an unwavering stare. This bitterness of trying to find an excuse rose up in Riddhe, and he had to look away.

“…The enemy’s Neo Zeon, you army! Are you really fine that I fight against them?”

“I won’t think that it’s fine, but that’s my problem. You have your duty and responsibility to fulfill.”

Riddhe felt that Mineva’s words were deliberately trying to tell him not to use her as an excuse as their eyes met. Mineva, who was clinging onto the assistance seat at the back, had already accepted this current situation in front of him. She left her life to him, seeming prepared to be blamed for all of eternity.

Riddhe did not want to disappoint her like this—no, he did not want to be mocked by her like this. Such a thought rose rapidly in him, shaking his body that was stuck at the spot. Mineva probably did not like a man who would think of what happened after and hesitate over the present. He did not have the will like Mineva, and had no belief that he could show decisiveness, but hoped that he did not give a wrong impression to her. That was her shtick, and Riddhe acknowledged in his mind that he may had been toyed by this woman of Zeon as he continued to stare at her eyes.

“You’ll probably regret for the rest of your life if you turn back now. Please follow your heart. If you make a decision from the bottom of your heart, I’ll accept it no matter the outcome.”

She finished, and her emerald eyes looked as sturdy as crystalline jade. He had no chances of winning her. Since the beginning, this girl barged into the Vist Foundation alone, and showed what she was made of when she became a hostage for the Federation. “I really have to hand it to you…” Riddhe mused as pulled down the helmet visor. *I may have really fallen for an unbelievable woman.* He again realized

this.

“The anti-G resistance on the assistance seat isn’t complete. It’s not going to be as easy to deal with as a roller coaster ride.”

“Right.”

“Once our allies start retreating, I’ll immediately leave the frontlines. Sorry for making you accompany me till then..”

Mineva fastened her body on the assistance as stared at the space that became a battlefield. *I really want to say that I’m being played by a woman. How can I bear such heavy things like duty and responsibility with logic alone?* Riddhe managed to clear his doubts, and he felt relaxed in his heart as he turned his face to the front. *Just got to fight it out.* He muttered deep inside his heart and stepped on the pedal.

BOOM. The shockwave that was like an explosion came from the force of the thrusters at the back, pushing the machine forward. Riddhe read the attack pattern on the monitor as he turned the control stick forward, turning straight down as he transformed the “Delta Plus”. The humanoid turned aside and immediately broke its shape and formed a spacecraft-form waverider. The forward of the enemy forces were detected by the motion sensors before they could get used to the sudden dip in angle before it went from moving down to moving forward.

The enemies seemed to be a modified version of the “Geara Doga”, the newest model of main forces the “Sleeves” had. Riddhe could see two similar type machines moving on standby behind this lead machine that was headed to the “Nahel Argama”, exchanging shots with the “ReZEL” Romeo 010. He read the situation through the through the markers that were flying all over the place, and deduced that this “Delta Plus” alone would be enough as he first aimed at the two mobile suits behind. He let the machine turn around, dodge the beam shots that came flying over from the forward unit, and squeezed the trigger of the beam rifle located above the unit.

The waverider’s firing state was right in front of the unit unlike how it was with the rifle. The beam went by the forward unit and mere grazed the left top side of the machine, but it was enough to divert the enemy’s attention. He pretended to be providing covering fire for the allied machine as he caught both the attentions of the machine that turned abruptly and the forward unit.

The G-force that struck up the feet wore down on Mineva, causing her to groan in agony. Riddhe’s sights were covered by the cheeks that

rose up, but caught sight of the monoeye of the forward unit in front of him. Riddhe's machine continued to rush into the battlefield without slowing down, and he transformed into a mobile suit before collision. The beam sabers formed its blades, and the crosshairs gave the alarm indicating lock on before Riddhe pressed the attack trigger down completely.

The slash that came sliced the arms of the forward unit together with its weapons. The forward unit lost the parts under its arms as it was unable to maintain balance, and immediately went to the back. Riddhe exhaled a moment later after having gathered all his concentration for that moment, and yelled "NOW YOU HAVE A REASON TO RUN AWAY. GO BACK!" He then aimed at the next enemy. The two machines scattered and left the Romeo 010 that lost its arm, and riddhe saw another machine with a beam hook coming right at him.

This attack looks like it was coming from the bottom, but it's actually trying to get to the back. The enemy pilot's thoughts entered Riddhe's forehead, causing him to immediately stop in his tracks. The "Delta Plus" turned half a round and manipulated the beam saber in its left hand to intercept the enemy's attack. The particles from the clashing blades let out sparks for just a moment, and the "Delta Plus" used the recoil to flip and deal a strike right at the enemy unit's waist. The multiple layers of armor melted, and the beam saber sliced off the movable frame, creating a vibrating feeling inside the cockpit. However, there was a sharper killing intent that came stronger than this vibration, shaking Riddhe's senses.

The remaining unit attacked one he stopped. Riddhe was prompted by this killing intent that was closing in, and did not even take time to aim as he raised his beam rifle to shoot. The mega particle beam that was released pierced through the "Sleeves" unit right from the front, and the expanding fireball lit the deep grey color of the "Delta Plus". Riddhe shook off the debris that scattered and let the beam saber stop working before leaving the scene. The enemy unit that was sliced apart by the beam saber gave out sparks and was crushed by the impact as it slowly floated in space.

"Amazing…! Did I just take them all down?"

Three units down once I sorties. Is it the "Delta Plus" abilities or the strong power of the Goddess of Luck that I'm able to showcase such fighting abilities. This joke-like development caused Riddhe to remain for a moment. "Another one from above!" Mineva's voice rang, and Riddhe immediately dodged. A thick and large beam then came right down from above, and the scorching hot particles were sprayed on the

“Delta Plus”.

There was a second, third shot that came flying over, and obviously, they did not from a beam rifle, as they were high energy output beams that was on a beam launcher’s level. Riddhe indicated that he wanted the Romeo 010 to move back, and squeezed the trigger to fight back while estimating the enemy’s location from the line of fire. The optical sensors caught sight of an enemy suit that was closing in, and the CG corrected image showed a purple machine on a wide window. This mobile suit had its data entered since the last battle with the “Sleeves”, and it was a special specs machine with booster pods on the back. “Lieutenant Angelo’s “Geara Zulu”…!” Mineva murmured as her expression changed.

“Someone you know?”

“He’s the leader of the escort squad, a very dangerous man. Be careful.”

The beams continued to rain down on Riddhe as it anticipated his dodging, seemingly backing up Mineva’s words. Riddhe did not even have the time to transform as it took him a lot of effort just to duck under the fire. The sublight blocking his way let out afterimages, closing in slowly on the “Delta Plus” as he remained restrained. The malice that was stickier than hostility descended on Riddhe, causing him to have goosebumps.

Part 6[edit]

It was an enemy that was looking for its next prey and felt like it was time to hold back. The machine itself could not be found in the database, and the unique appearance caused Angelo’s blood to boil.

“That Gundam-like machine…!”

Angelo let his machine move down behind the beams, and closed in on the relative distance to the enemy. The optical sensors caught sight of this enemy unit the moment they clashed, and it looked like a “Gundam” without horns. The machine was a dark grey color, but it was definitely a variation of a Gundam-type. *The Federation wants to keep using that White Devil legend that has a tail and make us recall the past humiliation again and again!* Angelo was motivated by his agitated nerves as he continued to squeeze the trigger of the beam rifle. The enemy unit intended to keep its distance, but was unable to remain steady, and the beams that were shot back left empty light axis in the middle of this pitch darkness.

“I won’t let you get away even if you want to transform and escape. If

you're a "Gundam", fight like one—"

The 4-barreled grenade launcher equipped inside the shield was fired, blowing up the path the enemy unit was headed to. Angelo used the moment the enemy unit hesitated due to the fireballs and slowed down to pull the beam hook out and shoot its booster pods.

"Die after you fight once!"

The particle blade in the shape of a sickle went right at the enemy unit's abdomen. *It'll hit.* The numb face showed a smile, and at that moment, a flash appeared right in front of him, blocking his sights. The rain of bullets hailed down, and the machine got caught in the shockwave as it was blown behind.

"What the…!?"

Angelo immediately let the machine steady itself, and looked over at the all-view monitor that was spinning less and slowing down. He saw a white machine with a thruster flare closing in on him fast. The automatic camera took a photo shot, and the enlarged version of it appeared on the window. The CG corrected image of the lone horned mobile suit was instantly etched in Angelo's sights. It was wielding the Beam Gatling Gun with both hands, seemingly waiting for a moment to fire a second time.

"…I see. So you want to make things tough for me like this?"

It was the boy who saw Frontal's true appearance and forced him to do a shameful thing. The RX-0 marker overlapped with Banagher's face, causing him to forget all other things.

"How bold you are…!"

The tail stabilizers on the back rose up like a tail, and the "Geara Zulu"s beam launcher was aimed right at the "Unicorn".

Part 7[edit]

The animosity and malice that came from the purple mobile suit rocked Banagher's heart like it had a physical hardness. The intention automatic system detected Banagher's wavelengths, causing the "Unicorn" to ignore the manual controls as it went side by side. The mega-particle shots came flying over a tad late, and the beam that was dodged at the last moment was reflected on the white armor.

"That purple guy's scary…!"

The delay time it took to show the killing intent before the shot was

almost zero. If he made a mistake here, even the “Unicorn”s interface would not be able to negate the damage. Banagher did not have time to fight back with the Beam Gatling gun as he focused on the purple machine. The Federation unit that was fighting the purple mobile suit from before appeared right beside him.

“Is that a new Federation model?”

It was an unregistered machine, but it could be identified as a Federation mobile suit from the clean streamlined contours. The pilot had the beam rifle at a position where he could fire readily, but he hesitated as he let the machine float around. Banagher thought that the mobile suit was waiting for the “Unicorn” to take action. A pulse suddenly started to rise deep within Banagher’s heart, and as his consciousness was attracted by that thing for several milliseconds (Where are you looking at!?) the voice came from the wireless communicator, hitting his eardrums.

The purple machine that got to his feet struck up from below. The “Unicorn” reacted to the direct killing intent by half and round, and despite deploying the I-field barrier on the shield, Banagher’s consciousness was too slow, causing the machine to lose its relative reaction speed. A beam of light came radiating out from the purple mobile suit, and the shield that could not block from the front directly was blown aside. The base of the shield cracked due to the impact, and the purple mobile suit used the opportunity presented when the “Unicorn” lost its protection as it closed the distance completely.

A beam blade appeared in his spinning sights. There was no time to adjust. Banagher’s brainwaves made this snap decision as he let the “Unicorn” draw out its beam saber.

“Tch…!”

It was a click of a tongue, but also one that could motivate him. He exhaled, and the machine was manipulated into wielding the grip and swing right down at the enemy. The purple machine too swung over, but the particles that were gathered in the form of a hook missed as it cut the space. In contrast, Banagher could see the “Unicorn”s saber being absorbed into the purple machine.

The beam launcher was raised to the front in place of a shield, eating up the extremely hot beam blade. The purple machine immediately let go of the long and thick cannon in its hands that was sliced and melted into half, but the distance to dodge the triggered explosion was still too close. The purple machine pulled the cartridge belt-like connector away from the backpack, and the beam launcher was sliced in half and

floated in space for just a moment. The internal generator exploded and formed a huge fireball, and the purple machine took the heat and shockwave as the boost pods' jets were blown aside weakly.

Got him— But it was not a fatal blow. Banagher let the machine steady itself, and looked around for the purple machine that left the sensor range. He had already activated the transmitter the Federation spy gave him, but there was no definite proof that the other side could receive the signal in space combat. He had to hurry up and reach the “Nahel Argama”, but he would not be able to talk if he did not fight back the purple unit. Banagher had the feeling that the purple machine would insist on fighting him no matter what as long as he did not shake off that person. He recalled the killing intent that was formed, the presence that was overly sticky, and recalled the voice of the pilot that remained in his ears, only to hear an approaching alarm ring out of a sudden, shocking him.

The IFF response window opened, indicating the coordinates of a Federation unit. Banagher understood that it was the new Federation unit from before, and a familiar voice rang in his ears (Banagher! You’re Banagher Links, right!?), causing his mind to go blank.

“Audrey…?”

Banagher let out a hoarse voice as he looked behind at the new model that was closing in. The Gundam-like new model suit was gradually becoming clearer in front of his eyes, and he felt his chest fluttering even strong as he subconsciously let the “Unicorn” machine turn around. The new machine raised its left arm that had a large shield on it and grabbed the “Unicorn” on its left arm.

(Are you alright? Banagher? It’s me, Mineva…Audrey Burne.)

Banagher had no reason to mishear the voice that came through the speakers. “Audrey…is it you, Audrey?” He leaned forward from his linear seat and stared at the new mobile suit. (That’s great that you’re fine…!) this voice came from the mobile suit without horns, but had the face of a “Gundam”, making Banagher feel that he was talking to a giant.

“Why’re you at such a place…are you piloting it?”

(No. I’m the pilot here, Ensign Riddhe Marcenas. You remember the model plane you caught before?)

The man’s voice entered the channel. Bnagher recalled the plane model in his mind and the expression of the young officer pursuing it, but it could not help him understand this situation. The new model left

Banagher alone as he was unable to understand the situaton and could only look back blankly; it faced the “Unicorn” and opened the cockpit cover.

The hatch deep within then opened, and the normal suit with its back facing the lights of the cockpit snuck out. It was impossible to tell the physique from the heavy-type normal suit, and it was impossible to see who it was as the face was covered by the helmet visor, but Banagher managed to feel it from the presence within. She actually showed herself on the battlefield in space. “That’s too reckless, Audrey!” Banagher chided as he expanded the window and moved the cursor over to the helmet of the normal suit.

He could see the bright energetic eyes sparkling under the visor. Those were the emerald eyes that indicated the start of everyone. Audrey’s eyes caused the nerves on his body to resonate and the passion to engulf his heart and body—

(There’s no time, Banagher, so listen up. After this, I’ll ride on this “Delta Plus” to Earth with Ensign Riddhe.)

Those eyes of hers were staring at Banagher firmly as she let out an adamant voice. *Why must you do this?* Banagher responded as he did not wait for his mind to clear, and Audrey’s voice continued, (This is what I decided after thinking).

(The Ensign’s father is a senator of the Senate Council, and a Central figure of the Space Migration Act. I intend to meet him and tell him everything about this. I want to settle this peacefully as a person who inherited the Zabi heritage—)

At that moment, an arm reached out to grab Audrey from behind and pulled her into the cockpit forceful. Banagher too pulled the control stick without waiting for the cockpit to close, and let the “Unicorn” move away from the new mobile suit called the “Delta Plus”. An object flew in at a high speed right at the last moment, passing between the two units. An explosion of light was than emitted less than a meter away.

It’s that purple guy. Banagher turned his back on Riddhe, who seemed to detect the same thing, and the “Delta Plus” he was piloting. He caught sight of the enemy from the sensor and hailed suppressing fire on it. The purple unit skillfully dodged the continuous fire of the Beam Gatling, drew out a rocket from its shield and loaded it into the launcher. The launcher that was at the waist let out a small spark, and the rocket was fired out as it closed in on the “Unicorn”, triggering a flash of explosion that ignited from close range.

The “Delta Plus” fought back with the beam rifle amidst this unstable situation. The purple unit continued to glide in space, dodging the fire as it continued to load the rockets. The “Unicorn” adjusted itself and raised the Beam Gatling gun. (I know you’ll be confused because it’s too sudden.) Banagher heard Riddhe’s explanation through the communication channel.

(But I’ll bear the responsibility of protecting Mineva…Audrey. It’s not easy to do this, but we’ve already tried our best to think of a good way to settle this. Please understand.)

(You should return back to the “Nahel Argama”. As long as you return with the “Unicorn”, the Federation Army will retreat. First…)

The fireball of explosion exploded beside, and the noise that got heavier covered Audrey’s voice. The impact shook the cockpit, and the scattered bits hitting the armor let out clear metallic sounds. *What in the world are they saying?* Banagher felt puzzled as he did not understand what was going on, and even though he had the feeling that he was being betrayed, he continued to search for Audrey’s voice amongst the channel as he kept the “Delta Plus” ferrying her in his sights.

He was right beside her, but he could not touch her. They could only give fleeting looks to each other, and he had no way of asking what her true intentions were. *Why didn’t I get out of the cockpit and meet her?* This regret tightened his chest, torturing his body that was being manipulated by the G-force.

Part 8[edit]

The purple “Geara Zulu” lost the weight of the beam launcher, and it was a lot more mobile than before. It showed off its unique trait as a long-ranged support machine as the large boost pods on the back, and it continued to follow no matter how Banagher and co tried to shake it off. They shot through a dummy balloon that expanded to the size of a mobile suit, but this was unable to fool the eyes of the pilot. The “Geara Zulu” with the commander blade antenna continued to cut down the dummies in its way. The large anti-mobile suit rocket, the Strum Faust was fired out from the handheld launcher, causing the dummy balloons caught within the explosions to dissipate immediately.

Despite losing the stability of its posture during this challenge, the “Unicorn” continued to raise its Beam Gatling gun and fired, trying its best to restrain the enemy’s action. The way it fired the shots had the flair of a novice, but there was no sense of fear in his action. He however felt that the machine wanted to move forward to attract the

enemy unit's attention. Even though he was scared, he hung on. With their glances at the unit with the monoeye, Riddhe calmly fired the beam rifle in quick succession, covering Banagher's back.

He realized that with Mineva on board, the "Delta Plus" could not fight as it wished. He should have told Mineva what was on his mind, but in this situation, it was impossible to grasp everything through limited words. She herself hoped to understand everything at least—this unknown emotion created an impulse, and Riddhe squeezed the trigger of the beam rifle until its maximum. The purple "Geara Zulu" dodged the fire and shot out a new Strum Faust.

The "Unicorn" and the "Delta Plus" were forced back by the impact of the explosion, and the interface opened automatically. (Audrey, just tell me something). Banagher's voice rang within Riddhe's ears.

(Is what you're going to do what you have to do? Or is it something you wanted to to?)

The unexpectedly calm voice caused Mineva, who's seated on the assistance seat, to shudder. After an instance of silence, she answered, "It's something I want to do…I think.) Banagher's reply then came in with the noise amidst the approaching sirens (I get it).

The "Geara Zulu" waved its beam saber to slice down the dummies and got behind the two machines from their feet. The "Unicorn" skillfully used the AMBAC's functions to change its position as it contacted the "Delta Plus" behind with a formal tone. (Ensign Riddhe!)

(I feel you're a man of your word. I'll leave Audrey to you.)

Riddhe had no time to answer. The “Unicorn” immediately broke contact with the “Delta Plus” and let out maximum output from the back boosters as it flew towards the enemy unit. The beam Gatling let out a sharp trail of beams, forcing back the purple “Geara Zulu”. Flashes of explosions occurred, and Riddhe stared at the sparks of the beam sabers clashing with each other. At that moment, they felt so distant from him; the battlefield in front of him and Audrey, who held her breath in anticipation. Numbing words were the only things echoing in his head.

The outdated words kept restraining his thoughts unconditionally. *You’re just a kid. What big words are you spouting there? Why are you so open-minded? I never showed any sense of trustworthiness here—*

“Such moving words…I don’t have a chance of winning here.”

There was a sense of heat that he never felt before, rising within his chest and expanding within. Riddhe ignored Mineva, who frowned in doubt, and turned the “Delta Plus” away.

Riddhe continued on to transform the mobile suit into the wave rider, and at that moment, he only considered about how to leave the battlefield. “Ensign, Banagher’s still…!” Mineva protested, but Riddhe had no intention of caring about it.

No matter how sharp this girl was, this was the only thing she definitely would not understand. That was because Banagher set a curse on him in a way only a man could do. “I understand.” He mused and looked forward.

“This is a matter between men. Please don’t interrupt.”

To her, this might be the first time in her life she was told off with a commanding tone. Mineva closed her half-opened mouth and lowered her silent face. Riddhe could no longer move forward or retreat, and experienced that he bore the fate of the person named Banagher as he turned the unit to “Palau” that had dust surrounding it. The anti-air fire was obviously decreasing, and the bright lights of the battle on the back observation window shone intensely into his eyes as a result.

Part 9[edit]

The Federation unit that transformed into a fighter jets flared its thrusters on the back as it hurriedly moved away. Angelo wanted to pursue it immediately, but was blocked by the bullet screen that was in the shape of a fan, and shuddered before he felt angry.

The ideal bullet array was to use the unit as the axis and spray the beam bullets out, and the “Unicorn” understood how to use the Beam Gatling gun in less than a minute of fighting. It managed to maximize the effectiveness of the armament it was not equipped, and even bought time for the new Gundam-type to escape.

“Those two Gundam planned this beforehand…!”

Considering the time the two units interacted with each other, it would be impossible for him to be so adept at this so quickly. *What kind of composure does this brat have? Angelo used up the last Strum Faust, threw the launcher at the “Unicorn” and let the “Geara Zulu” fly over at it. Right when the beam hook was about to materialize completely (Lieutenant Angelo, can you hear me?) A calm voice came from the wireless communicator.*

(Retreat back to the “Rewloola”. Let Ensign Marida be the “Unicorn”s opponent.)

Frontal’s voice came from beneath the noise, and Angelo’s mind that was gushing full of blood calmed down. “But…!” He tried to argue back

for a moment, “I should have told you the plan, have I not?) the voice interrupted Angelo’s attempt to argue back, and he stopped the vibration of the beam hook.

(The “Kshatriya” is heading there now. This is something only she can do.)

Angelo stepped on the foot pedal and raised the ball-shaped control stick to move above the “Unicorn” as it raised a screen of bullets, looking for the coordinates of his ally unit on the motion sensor.

It was the NZ-666 “Kshatriya”; while the other allied forces were retreating, this was the only mobile suit being indicated on the sensor, moving closer. There was a sense of presence that that was beyond electronic signals, engulfing the sensor screen. Angelo looked back at the “Unicorn” that looked bothered as he continued to retreat, and had the anger of a prey being snatched away reigniting within him as he looked forward and said, “Roger that.”

“…It’s a job for Cyber-Newtypes, huh?”

He accidentally blurted it out in his anger, annoying him. The Newtype Research labs were used to create artificial Cyber-Newtypes for military use. In the past, it was said to be used for research on ways to create Newtypes, but in fact, they were experimenting on lab subjects that would not offer any ill consequences—said to be mostly underaged war ophans—as they ignored the ethics of life.

Their research ranged from injecting drugs, forcing ideals on them, manipulating and rewriting memories to manipulating gene composition to improve their respiratory functions. The results of them manipulating the human mind and mental capacity were that they simply created a bunch of useless people who were addicted to drugs. They managed to obtain decent results in their research during the Neo Zeon war later on, but the emotionally unstable human-like weapons that were developed easily became double-edged swords. It had been a long time since the Federation and Neo Zeon ceased such research, and, looking at the significance of how official records did not leave any traces of this, it could be said that Cyber-Newtypes was such a shameful history that it was erased by man after the war.

Most notable was Marida Cruz, who inherited the best gene samples that were ‘enhanced’ and specialized in high mobility combat. It was said that she was at a level where the other Cyber-Newtypes could never ever match. *So we’ll let a monster handle a monster?* Angelo glanced aside at the RX-0 that was becoming distant and mused to himself as he navigated the unit’s trajectory to the southern tip of the

“Palau”.

Frontal’s “Sinanju” too was gradually returning back to the southern tip to gather with the fleet. *Everything’s proceeding as planned*— yes, this was a battlefield enacted out under Frontal’s plan. As for what kind of nature the monster that devoured the “Laplace Box” would show, their side just needed to watch it from the other side. Angelo managed to more or less appease his unhappiness as he looked at this abnormally shaped mobile suit that bore this responsibility. The “Kshatriya” was not limited by it's massive bulk that was several times that of an ordinary mobile suit as it skillfully turned around and passed by the “Geara Zulu”s feet.

Part 10[edit]

Marida activated the binder that was just repaired, and let the machine turn around. The front left binder was the only one amongst the 4 binders flapping, and it managed to stop the “Kshatriya” from turning sideways any further.

The controls felt a little light, but it was not bad in any means. Marida had no need to deliberately activate the calibration system as she got used to the AMBAC functions. She then used the sub-arm hidden inside the binder, which was destroyed together with the binder in the last battle, and the base unit part had to be replaced. It quickly extended out, and the fingertips did a hook. CRAK CRAK. The sound entered the cockpit in the form of a tremor, and Marida knew that the unit was repaired.

It’s really lucky that the Psycommu isn’t damaged. Marida again had this thought. At this moment, Neo Zeon did not have the technology to build the Psycommu frame, and the spare parts of the “Kshatriya” only consisted of ordinary mobile suits alone. The reactivity of the unit would be reduced by half once the Psycommu frame installed around the cockpit was damaged, and they could not repair it at will later on. This ‘spare part’ and this one and only unit were all built from lost technology—to what extent would she face off against this opponent that was built from a Psycoframe? Marida expanded the monitor window, directed the cursor to the CG corrected lone-horned body and cautiously closed in her distance with the “Unicorn”.

The “Unicorn” did not commit the foolish act of letting the enemy corner it from behind as it raised the Beam Gatling while retreating steadily, showing that it was observing her actions. *The weapon in its hands is newly developed for this “Kshatriya” here,* Marida gave a wry look as she looked right at the white machine that was intending to slip away from her sights. *Did he randomly take this when he was*

intending to take the machine out of the factory? It's really something that nonchalant-looking boy with keen foresight would do; to be able to use his sharp instincts to grab such a powerful weapon.

(I don't know how that brat got hold of the "Unicorn", but there's one thing I know now, and that is we can't let that machine fall into the Federation's hands.)

Zinnerman's voice could be heard amongst the noise from the "Garencieres", currently at a rear side of the fleet. Marida exhaled and removed her wry look.

(You can destroy any other part as long as the cockpit core in intact. Your top priority is to secure the unit. Don't think about the pilot.

The soft voice proved that Zinnerman was concerned about the pilot, or perhaps he was considering the fact that they would have to fight him as their opponent. "Understood. I'll secure the unit as priority." Marida answered without any expression as she ceased all meaningless thoughts. If possible, she would capture the unit without any damage; if not, she had to rip out the cockpit's core without even the pilot was crushed. Marida herself had no hesitation no matter who it was on board. There was no need for an *Artificial Being* to spend time thinking about it.

Even till now, Marida found it hard that Banagher Links, that boy with puppy-like earnest-looking eyes was the pilot of the "Unicorn". At this point, there was no clear explanation as to what sort of thoughts he had, and what methods he used to reach the 'cove', but the fact remained that the "Unicorn" joined the battle. Marida looked through the machine's specifications, and knew that she would be massacred if she did not go all out. She could only accept this situation, face it and try to deal with it. if she could do it well and end things properly, her failure at "Industrial 7" would be negated. She did not have any honor and pride worth protecting, but she had to erase the black mark on Master Zinnerman.

"There isn't any just war, is there…?"

Even though she tried to conceal these words within, such personal thoughts still leaked out. If only humanity could have Gods, there would be as many Gods as Man. Justice would not exist in this case, and righteousness might not be the only thing that could save humanity. No matter what the thing saving humanity was, the Cyber-Newtype, an artificially created being, no other means of beliefs to rely on, and there was no need for her to change—Marida shook aside the image of the boy's face she saw in the chapel and looked forward with

an antagonizing look. She accelerated the “Kshatriya” by boosting the thrusters to the maximum and started to close the relative distance with the “Unicorn”.

Part 11[edit]

The transported goods were filled inside the large bucket and sent onto the rail of the electromagnetic catapult. As the bucket reached the end point, the contents would be thrown into space. This would be a crude way of explaining things, but it was the working principle of a mass driver.

The transported goods that were thrown out would pass through space through inertia, and the mass catcher at the destination would receive it. The mass catcher was a round cone-shaped thing 100m long in diameter and 150m long, and it resembled a funnel safety net. The transported goods would be covered by a bag made of fiberglass, and it would be shed away when the goods flew into the mass catcher. With that, only the contents would be left within the funnel. Thus, it was possible to carry out zero costs space transportation other than the operating fees of the facility and the disposable bag. Obviously, this facility was not suitable for transporting humans or delicate machines, but it was fine to make the transport a little more rough if they were sending mineral resources. Thus, the Moon would have such a facility as a frontline base to build space colonies, and to mining colonies like “Luna Two”, a long rail required for a mass catcher would be imperative.

“Palau” was no exception in this case, and the mass driver was located on the front of the bow-shaped “Calyx”, with 10km’s length of rail protruding into space. The mineral rocks that were excavated would be sent onto the rail in order and fly to the mass catcher in Side 6 as part of the mining process. The “Delta Plus” shook off the pursuit from Angelo’s unit as it head towards “Palau”. At this point, what appeared in front of it was the triangular prism supporting the mass driver rail.

The rail was extended out from the mining tunnel, supported by numerous pillars that rose out from the rocky surface, and the endless high frame remained unmoved in the midst of the darkness. Riddhe cautiously let the “Delta Plus” float around with the units that were basically turned to dust and close the distance with the rail. The scattering winds picked up bits of fine particles, and looking over, it was not easy to distinguish between the floating rubble or the mobile suit rubble. The debris that were floating around the mass driver was abnormally more than usual amongst the rocks that were not launched successfully. The “Delta Plus” moved along the pillars that were 2km

tall at maximum and reached the side of the rail, stopping its relative velocity in front of the access panel for maintenance use.

The left manipulator hand reached for the panel screen, and a sensor cable was shot out from the part that was basically the base of the thumb. The cable that shot out like a whip approached the panel screen, and the universal-use access panel opened its connectors automatically as the front tip of the sensor cable was connected. The computer immediately started reading the information and sent the data of the mass driver over to the cockpit of the “Delta Plus”. The launch acceleration, the transport bucket launch schedule and the current trajectory were revealed. “How is it?” Mineva asked, unable to catch up the values that were scrolling dwon in front of her. Riddhe ignored her and stared at the data for several seconds and answered, “Right, looks like it can work” and turned his brightened face at Mineva.

“It’s just as I guessed. The direct hit from the hyper mega-particle cannon redirected the course. We’ll be able to reach Earth like this.”

The original setting of the trajectory was directed to the Side 6 mass catcher, but at this point, it was redirected to Earth. The “Delta Plus”, which used up a lot of its thruster jets during the battle just now, could not reach Earth on its own, so this would be a great relief to it akin to recovering a lost train ticket. They just had to let the machine ride on the transport bucket and prepare for the countdown before they launched to Earth. If the access panel was not locked, they could probably let the control system from here.

Mineva could not help but feel relieved. She would have lost her chance to escape if she was brought back onto the “Nahel Argama” again. Riddhe opened the visor of his helmet and wiped away the sweat on his forehead as he showed a relieved expression, uttering out, “We might have gotten some of that guy’s luck too” jokingly. That guy—Banagher Links; Mineva deliberately restrained the pricking pain in her heart as she looked at the space on the other side of the rail that had become a battlefield.

The situation was reduced to an extent that only anti-air fire appeared from time to time, and there were basically no signs of beams or explosion lights. Amidst them, Mineva detected a glow that was sharper than the stars, and the killing intent were all gathered at a point in space. She reached her hand out at the all-view monitor to stare at that spot.

The killing intent continued to gather, racing amongst the starry sea as thin beams crossed each other. What Mineva saw was not a normal battle between mobile suits. There were flashes of funnels’ fire, and

the one on the other side, dodging the attacks and firing back with beams was the “Unicorn”— *a “Gundam” said to be built for fighting Newtypes.* If not, it would be impossible for the unit to dodge the funnel attacks that were swarming from all directions.

As far as Mineva knew, there was only one person amongst the “Sleeves” who could control the funnels. The hand touching the monitor tensed up as Mineva continued to stare at the flashes of light despite wanting to look away. Marida was fighting against Banagher, and she sealed her heart while fighting, her killing intent reaching out to this place. If she could use that kind of power properly, she could have realized that Mineva was at this place.

“What is it?”

Riddhe said as he looked behind and gave a probing look at Mineva as he stopped the hand that was changing the mass driver settings. *He’s really too concerned for others.* Mineva felt annoyed “It’s fine…” as she looked away.

“Hurry on to the next step. We have nothing else to do.”

Mineva diverted her focus away from the killing intent that remained and looked in front. There was an endless darkness appearing in front of the long rail. Mineva did not look at any expression Riddhe might have on his face as he continued work, and focused on looking at the path deciding her destination. The the battle between the “Kshatriya” and the “Unicorn” showed no signs of ending, and the icy cold stare continued to sparkle in a corner of Mineva’s sights.

Part 12[edit]

ZAA. These sounds were let out as the small cannon pods surrounded the unit. They were like metal sand attracted by a magnet, sticking onto him no matter how he tried to shake them off, and would let out swarming attacks from all directs without stopping.

“These guys!”

Banagher continued to squeeze the trigger of the Beam Gatling without aiming and turned the “Unicorn” to the side. The automatic cannon pods that moved into the dead angles let out beams at the same time, and the fan-shaped bullet screen interfered with the mega-particle bullets, creating chains of sparks. As the flashlight-like lights continued to radiate, Banagher saw the source of the automatic cannon pods fly above his head. The 4 binders opened up like petals, and immediately got right below the linear seat.

“It’s that 4-winged, huh…”

It was the abnormally shaped mobile suit that brought about calamity to “Industrial 7”, and it was blocking the path in front of the “Unicorn” like it switched with the purple unit that retreated. *I should be making contact with the “Nahel Argama” as soon as possible.* Banagher anxiously squeezed the trigger, and the automatic cannon pod that got behind it attacked like it was mocking him. The “Unicorn”, which lost its shield and the protection of the I-field, felt a shock, and a killing intent that came right below pierced through Banagher.

The “Unicorn” Intention Automatic System responded, and it turned 90 degrees as it pointed the gun at the source of this killing intent. At that moment, an automatic cannon pod that got diagonally below gave another hit, bending the Beam Gatling gun that took a direct hit. Banagher immediately let go of the weapon, but he could not evade the threat of the explosion that expanded from zero distance. The anti-glare filter could not reduce the flash that lit the cockpit, and the machine took the shockwave as it rattled.

“You!”

That four-winged rushed into this flash, lit its monoeye and struck from below. This killing intent blew through the cockpit, and Banagher felt the wind pressure nearly peel his scalp off. The “Unicorn” automatically drew the beam saber that let out particles and hacked right at the saber of the 4-winged horizontally. The colliding sparks exploded, and the large frame of the 4-winged grazed above him. Suddenly, there was a sweet aroma mixed within the killing intent.

“What’s going on…?”

It was a sweet fragrance that surrounded his body, a complete mismatch for the skin-crawling killing intent. Of course, that was because a girl’s sweat smelled sweet—

“Miss Marida…is that you?”

These unexpected words came out from Banagher’s mouth, and he felt his throat tensing up. He did not know why, but he could conclude that this sweetness belonged to Marida. This was the scent he smelled from her in the detention room on the ship and the silent chapel. The four-winged looked like it was in no mood for negotiations, but there was that defenseless silhouette hidden within. The eyes that resembled the deep sea color of Earth, the eyes that looked like they contained a gentle light when she smiled, they were looking at him from deep within the thick armor—

“Miss Marida!? If it’s you, please listen to me! This is Banagher Links!”

The small automatic cannon pods were two meters long, and as they were too small, they could not be picked up on the motion sensor as they gathered a large amount of killing intent and closed in. Banagher detected an opening from amidst the multi-direction ball-shaped attack that was showing signs of disorder, let the machine swing the beam saber and stepped on the foot pedal.

The automatic cannon pods seemed to scatter in doubt. There was a sign that the 4-winged mobile suit in front was retreating. “I’m right…!” Banagher mused as he used this momentum to step on the pedal and let the “Unicorn” rush towards the 4-winged.

The normal suit sensed the G-force coming from below and hardened the jelly-like fluids within into a metal-like state. Banagher’s upper body was held in place tightly, but it could not prevent his blood from rising up, which caused the blood vessels above his neck to expand. He endured the pressure as his pores felt like they were spurting out blood, and shook off the pursuit of the automatic cannon pods as he got right at the four-winged clutches. As the “Unicorn”s left arm was about to touch the heel of the opponent, the four-winged quickly flipped, got behind and was about to swing down the beam saber in its hand.

There was no time to activate his beam saber. The “Unicorn” turned around, but it was too late as the beam saber was right in front of Banagher’s eyes, and a shock that nearly caused him to bite his tongue rocked the cockpit. *Am I killed?* Banagher could not even let his nerves close his eyes properly as he merely felt his lower body relax, and saw the monoeye appearing on the all-view monitor.

The opponent let the emotionless monoeye move under sharp its Mohawk-like head like it was intending to observe Banagher’s action. The 4-winged pretended to swing down its beam saber as its 4-wings were just restraining the “Unicorn” body. It was unknown when the sub-arms were deployed as they reached out from below the binders, grabbing the “Unicorn”S limbs. “Marida—” Banagher realized that his unit was being sealed off completely as he was about to open his trembling mouth. At that instant, the 4-winged placed the grip of the beam saber it was wielding onto the flank of the “Unicorn”, and the heavy sound of metal crashing into each other rang within the cockpit.

(Surrender, Banagher Links, or I’ll burn the entire cockpit down.)

A monotonous voice rang, and the beam saber that was resting on the abdomen rattled the cockpit with loud noises. “Miss Marida…! Why’re

you—" Banagher eked out his voice, (I should have said it before.) but felt a chill down his spine after hearing her respond with cold words.

(Once someone rides on a mobile suit and enters the battlefield, he can only be considered a fighting unit called a pilot. Whoever it is sitting inside, it has nothing to do with me.)

The cockpit let out an unsteady resonance as the beam saber's grip remained in idling state. (Cut the main generator, and get out from the cockpit—) and Banagher ignored her words as he argued "Even so!"

"Even so, you're still Miss Marida to me. I do apologize for running away on my own, but only I can do this. You don't want "Palau" to turn into a battlefield, right? The Federation army will retreat once they can take back this "Unicorn"."

(That's just the enemy's view.)

The 4-winged binders that resembled a beetle fluttered as the hidden sub-arms holding the machine shook it. "LISTEN TO ME!" Banagher yelled as he held on tightly to the linear seat that was rocking unsteadily.

"Audrey…your princess has returned back to the battlefield. She rode on a mobile suit to stop this battle—"

On saying this, Banagher's back suddenly froze. *You idiot, why did you say so many unnecessary things?* He cursed himself in his heart, and Marida's voice got sharper, (The Princess' here?), and Banagher clicked his tongue inadvertently.

(I'll take the Princess back as well. Where's she?)

The 4-winged used its large body as a pivot as its hidden arms shook the "Unicorn" unit twice, thrice. Banagher felt the tremor that felt like his brain was being meshed up, and he tried to pull the control stick and stepped on the pedal to leave. The thrusters on the back let out flares, and the moveable frame let out a shrill rubbing sound. The "Unicorn"s raised its arms slowy, and in an instant, it pulled aside the hidden sub-arms that resembled an insect's legs. However, the 4-winged quickly used its main hands to grab the "Unicorn"s head.

The 5-fingered manipulator hands that were held down tightly were held down tightly, and the head with the lone horn was tilted back. The all-view monitor let out noise, and the malfunction windows continued to appear. If this kept up, the machine would be snapped, "MISS MARIDA!" Banagher yelled out, but his voice was half-buried amongst the buzzing alarms.

“Please just think about how to end this battle! Tikva and the rest may get involved in it!”

(Then just surrender and tell me the Princess’ whereabouts so that our army will retreat too.)

I can’t do this. Banagher immediately had this thought as he asked himself, *Why?* (Do you see?) He continued to listen to Marida’s words while at his wits ends.

(You keep saying that you just want the battle to end, but you’re thinking from the enemy’s viewpoint. That’s because you’re already a part of things here.)

“No! You’re the one wrong here! It’s because your thoughts are too straightforward that Audrey wouldn’t stay there. I feel I can’t hand over the “Box” or Audrey to people like you because…”

(I said that’s the reasoning of the enemy!)

The hands were pressing down on the 4-winged, and the overload sign showed up on the condition monitor. The frame continued to let out a rattling sound, and Banagher felt like Marida was seriously trying to destroy the “Unicorn” as anger stronger than fear exploded within him. *You pretend not to see it even though you can see it. That’s a power you’re exerting stubbornly after sealing your heart. You of all people know that brute force alone won’t be able to solve anything here—!*

“YOU’RE REALLY UNREASONALE!”

Red phosphorus light glowed through the armor gaps, and the moveable frame the expanded aside nocked back the 4-winged hidden sub-arms. At the same time, the leg frames popped up and extended, and the movable armor slid aside, shaking aside the hook of the hidden sub-arms.

The lone horn split into two, and the face cover that rose up knocked aside the manipulator hands of the 4-winged. The thruster nozzles on the back let out a burst of flares, and the machine that shook off the restrains of the hidden sub-arms finished its transformation as it lit its pair of matching ‘eyes’.

(“Gundam”…!?)

Marida’s muttering faded far away, and arms came out of the headrest, fixing Banagher’s helmet in place. There was a slight shock from the arms and ankles, and Banagher realized that the anti G-force drug delivery system “DDS” was already activated as he let the “Unicorn”

move above the head of the 4-winged.

The stinging fragrance spread in his nose, and the heat flow of the brain pulsating rushed throughout Banagher's body. The black impulse rose within him, and the nervous system that was in sync with the machine had been dyed just like tar. *Not good,* Banagher thought, but his rational sense that was trying to think could not work as he already viewed the 4-winged in front of him as an enemy. *It's pointless to talk further against an enemy who just want to overpower through force. I'll have to beat this person here to ensure that Audrey can return back safely, and that I can get back to the "Nahel Argama". Don't think I'm just a pushover here—*

The flickering "NT-D" logo shone through the helmet visor, dyeing Banagher's sights red. The vaguely drifting sweet aroma scattered, and Marida's scent vanished from the cockpit.

Part 13[edit]

"NT-D activation confirmed. The target's now fighting with the "Kshatriya"."

This voice came from the operator seated at the communications console in a corner of the "Rewloola"s standard bridge. "Good." Frontal answered, and his voice echoed down from the tall ceiling. His tall and lanky body that was draped in bright red was standing beside the captain's seat.

"This Psyco Monitor isn't perfectly effective. Focus on the signals from it, understood, captain?"

"Understood." Captain Hill, who was seated on the captain's seat, answered with a calm expression on his head. This would definitely be the only chance for him, the captain of the "Rewloola" to show off his skills as he could only remain at the back, watching the battlefield while his subordinates did not even have the chance to perform. "Warm up the main unit first. Our ship will head out from behind "Palau" based on the situation. Take care not to let down your guard against other units." Angelo passed through the bridge door beside Captain Hill who raised his volume. He minded about how he walked in in the normal suit drenched in sweat as he stood beside the red figure looking up at the main screen.

The screen displaying the optical visuals showed the two mobile suits clashed in a deathmatch. The crude would let out beams of light from time to time, but it was impossible to see the silhouettes of the mobile suits. It was impossible to tell whether the "Kshatriya" or the "Unicorn"

had the advantage, but the details of the battle did not matter here.

The necessary information would be transmitted from the Psyco Monitor installed on the “Unicorn”s Psycommu—a Psycommu receiver device. This tapping installation would activate the moment the NT-D was activated, and would send the details the unit gave in large amounts. As the waves that were sent were released from the Psycommu, there was no worry about the Minovsky particles interfering. The sending range was limited, but they should be able to gain complete unmistakable information. In fact, the sub-monitor of the communication monitor was already collecting information at a high rate, and started probing into the Laplace System that was activated together with the NT-D.

The coordinates that was suspected to indicate the location of the “Box” was shown before. Then, what would be the content be—Angelo swept his sweaty bangs that were hanging on his forehead and looked at the binary files that were being rolled in, but a certain roar “WHAT’S GOING ON!” caused him to raise his eyebrows. Zinnerman, who was dressed in a normal suit, was holding a helmet on one hand as he rushed into the bridge.

Zinnerman ignored Captain Hill, who was shocked as he looked back, and let his body float under zero gravity to the Captain’s seat. *So he came?* Angelo saw the rage within the black eyes, and was blocked by Zinnerman in front as he stood in front of Frontal. “Captain, did something happen to the “Garencieres”? Frontal gave an interested look at Zinnerman, who glared back at him and roared, “WHY DID YOU LEAVE MARIDA ALONE!?” The gruff and heavy voice echoed through the bridge, and everyone present stared at Zinnerman.

“I heard that you gave the order to the entire army to fall back. Why is Marida the only—”

(To activate the NT-D, we’ll have to let beings that are similar to Newtypes clash. This is a job only Ensign Marida can do.”

The overly simplified explanation curbed Zinnerman’s momentum as he frowned. “The “Unicorn Gundam” has a Psyco Monitor installed on it.” He said quietly as he looked back at the main screen.

“Once it’s activated, we can obtain new information from here. Since we can’t analyze the Laplace Program, it will be faster to let the Program unseal itself. For this aim, I guided that boy Banagher to the “Unicorn”. I’m really sorry to hide it from you too.”

They used the Federation spy, planned it such that Banagher would

ride on the “Unicorn”, and prepared a program that would start reading once the NT-D. This assault might have granted Neo Zeon a new rebirth and helped sweep away the ‘Old Blood’ of unease within their camp, but they had to fool even insiders thoroughly in order to complete this program. From the investigations up till their point, they knew that the NT-D system could not be fooled by a mock battle. It would be impossible to activate the NT-D unless it was a real battlefield with lives on the line.

Is everything on the battlefield an act Frontal planned— Zinnerman seemed to have this understanding as he turned pale. “But Marida..” and his vague voice showed no signs of ending. “I understand.” Frontal answered and lowered his head slightly.

“The Cyber-Newtypes are those with their nervous transmitting system upgraded through artificial means, and they can’t be considered pure Newtypes. But Captain, what exactly are pure Newtypes?”

Zinnerman swallowed his words and remained silent as he gave a doubtful look at the face wearing the mask. Frontal did not care about the other party as he turned his stare to the screen and said, “No one can answer it.”

“Are they people who have exceptional senses such that they can cause the Psycommu weapons to work? In terms of effect, Ensign Marida can be said to be a Newtype. Then, the NT-D will use this phenomenon as basis to determine the opponent as a Newtype and use it’s original power.”

The hard lights and shadows could be seen crossing each other on the zoomed footage caught, right in front of the stare under the mask. Both giants continued the dance of death as they tried to kill each other, not knowing if the perpetrator planned this. Beside him, Zinnerman stared at the screen too, and Frontal gave a mystical-like smile on his lips.

“That “Gundam” hasn’t showed its real form yet. We’ll have Ensign Marida draw out its real nature.”

Part 14[edit]

The funnel that was shot down became a fireball, and the shockwave scattered in all directions. Marida wanted to flip the machine at the last moment, but it could not dodge the “Unicorn Gundam” that came rushing in while cutting through the explosion of dust and gas that occurred.

The enemy unit fired its Vulcan guns, and two trails of fire grazed the “Kshatriya”. Marida continued to dodge as she checked the positions

of the deployed funnels as she passed her intent over to these Psycommu installations to shoot from behind the “Gundam”. The nearby funnels immediately lit their burners to adjust and shot out beams from their tips. At this moment, the “Unicorn Gundam” did a roll, let out a flash from its burners, and disappeared from Marida’s sights like a scene in an action movie. The funnel beams crossed the vacuum, and the “Kshatriya”s thick green machine floated in the darkness.

“Stop dodging around…!”

Marida muttered, and she stepped on the pedal. The “Kshatriya” went full throttle as it followed the “Gundam”, and the G-force that came pressurizing from above caused her flesh to tremble about. The blood vessels contracted, and the blood that was pressed down by the centrifuge force remained where it was. The 12 organs inside the body supporting the heart pulsated to grant a steady blood supply to the head. The body of flesh that was designed for high mobility combat shuddered, and the nervous system was quickly processing the movements of the “Unicorn Gundam”. The enemy’s acceleration and sharp turns were not usual—but her eyes were gradually getting used to it. There was not much improvement in this direct movement that had the flair of an amateur compared to the fight she had at “Industrial 7”. Marida deduced that she could win if she attacked calmly.

Speaking of which, it was impossible for an ordinary person to last so long under such conditions. The enemy was not even a professional pilot here. If this amateur really blurted it out accidentally, it meant that he did not say this in an irresponsible manner. There was a need to hurry up and wear out the “Unicorn Gundam” and reclaim Mineva who seemed to be nearby. Zinnerman had always been protecting Mineva Zabi as he placed his dream of Neo Zeon’s revival on her. Even though he never said it before, he had always viewed reclaiming Mineva as his top priority. Marida herself did not have any interest in Neo Zeon’s revival, but her master’s wish would be her wish, and her master’s enemies would be her enemies. Marida had to do what she must do even if she had to sacrifice her life. To Marida, who gained life as an artificial being, there was no philosophy she exalted more than this.

Speaking of which, Zinnerman would probably tell her that this was not right. *You’re not an artificially-created thing, you’re a person. Decide where you want to go. He would probably say such things, and because of this, I have to live on as an artificial being. I have to become a humanoid weapon that makes use of this body that had its genes manipulated for battle and protect Master. There’s no way I’ll be*

able to repay him, and I can't repay the thing that save me, that thing Master called the 'light'—

"…This will be over!"

This thought process lasted for less than a second. Marida saw through the "Unicorn Gundam"s flight path and let her thoughts control the 16 funnels through a voice. The automatic cannon pods that received the commands of the thought waves moved as if they were dragged, and the "Kshatriya" fired mega-particle cannons from its torso and the binders. The sublight bullets that were refracted through the I-field flushed in from all directions like a tap with the stopper pulled out from the faucet at full stream, raining down on the "Unicorn Gundam" that was moving around at high speeds.

The burners located all over the body let out flares, and the "Gundam" machine did an emergency turn. The funnels that first got over in front of the "Gundam" tried to shoot out beams as it intended to force the machine into the other funnels range as they were aligned in a sphere. The "Gundam" sensed the perimeter that was formed with killing intent, and the next term would be the crucial moment. The thruster lights continued to flare, and Marida saw that the "Unicorn Gundam" was moving in the direction it predicted beforehand before sending the attack thoughts to the funnels that were on standby.

The pink beams crossed a certain point, hitting the thruster vane on the back of the shins. Just when the second hit looked like it was going to hit the machine that lost its balance, the right shoulder armor got crushed first, and the Psycoframe that was revealed after the shedding let out a bloody luminescent light. In less than a second, the funnels surrounded this machine that was spinning under such force and lost its control. Marida deliberately chose not to aim at the generator as she shot the burners and the thrusters to nullify it. She gathered the sight of all 16 funnels into her consciousness, and as she turned this expanded instinct into an attack, the machine of the "Unicorn Gundam" suddenly shot out a 'presence' that seemed to form a giant wind that had a physical effect, flowing right at the cockpit Marida was in.

It was impossible to imagine that this came from the pilot within there. The 'air' that was now filled with powerful antagonistic intent passed through the normal suit, ruffling Marida's sweaty skin as it blew behind. The feeling of a rotten slug passed through her body and dug in—the sealed memories rose up Marida's throat, and in an instant, she could not tell which direction was which any longer as she could only gather her attack thoughts to the funnels. However, the funnels remained unmoved as they surrounded the "Unicorn Gundam", waiting silently

with no signs of moving.

It felt like time stopped. The enemy unit, surrounded by the funnels that were floating weakly, continued to let out this overwhelming ‘air’ as it stared at Marida. *You dare to hurt me*— a thought, not from the pilot, but an arrogant and merciless thought pierced the membrane of Marida’s mind, and as the ‘existence’ that felt like it was pulsating nearby spread through the vacuum, the “Unicorn Gundam” raised its right hand slowly.

The 5 fingers that were opened let out an invisible wave, causing the funnels that were still remaining to let out their burner flares. They then moved according to the “Gundam”s fingers, and turned around with their cannons pointed at the main unit, the “Kshatriya”.

The matching eyes reflected the glow on its Psycoframe as they turned red, flickering like they were making a mockery. *The “Gundam”s the enemy*—this thought appeared in Marida’s mind, and at that moment, the “Unicorn Gundam” swung down its right hand, causing the funnels filled with antagonistic intent to attack Marida.

サイコフレームの光を引き継ぎ、赤色に転じた一対の目が嗤うように揺れる。《ガンダム》は敵――。（本文より）

The beams then came firing out from the cannons, and multiple beams were aimed at the “Kshatriya”. Marida immediately dodged and tried to gather her thoughts on the funnels, only to be shocked that she could not plot out the funnels’ paths. Marida did not know where the funnels were. Due to the wave interference of the “Gundam”, the Psycommu lost its contact and control of the funnels’ locations.

“What’s going on, funnels? Can’t you recognize me!?”

The funnels that lost their sense of self were firing the mega-particle cannons, pecking at their mother bird “Kshatriya”. A graze caused an impact to rock Marida, and her face that was buried inside the safety airbag. She could only release the expanding the mega-particle cannons reluctantly. The sublight scattered shots came flying out of the chest, and the two funnels that took direct hits let out explosions of light. The “Kshatriya” turned its back on that light and sliced the funnel that was closing in. Marida let the machine rush out of the array and turned her sights at the source of this wave that was surrounding her.

“You bastard, what did you do!?”

The “Kshatriya” ignited its thrusters at full power and got behind the white unit. The “Unicorn Gundam” remained still at that spot in space, not moving at all. It raised its arms up and spread them out wide, and the attachments installed on the arms became beam saber grips. The two grips were located at the cuffs supported by the arms, and the front of the “Gundam”s arms showed sharp blades of light.

The arms that became beam sabers extended out from both left and right side, and the machine immediately moved, disappearing from Marida’s sights. Marida blinked in astonishment as she looked around through the all-view monitor, but the impact that came from right below immediately caused her to scream. The starry sea that filled her sights moved, and immediately, the sight of the sliced binder tip appeared right in front of her, gradually moving away from the body. The “Gundam” did not let go of this opening. While the “Kshatriya” stopped and turned around to fire the mega particle cannons, it slashed right that the enemy and dragged a trail of red phosphorus light over the enemy’s head.

The beams that came raining down from all directions caused the machine that had the sabers molded together with it to leap as if it were dancing. The mega-particle cannons beams were dodged easily, and the enemy got into a dead angle and shot an icy cold wave at Marida’s bag.

Marida shot out a dummy balloon, something she had never used

before, and used it to hold off the enemy figure that was hacking at it like a wild wind. She knew she was being toyed with, and felt a chill from it. This movement was different from the “Gundam” before. It was reading Marida’s movements completely as it slowly but surely tortured the “Kshatriya”, and its thoughts were reaching Marida’s skin. It was a thought that had cold delight mixed in it, one belonging to the joy of a hunter—

“Who…are you?”

Banagher Links’ silhouette did not appear there. There was no sense of anger or madness, and the “Gundam” that transformed into a hunting machine sliced off the dummy while the funnels supporting it wore down the “Kshatriya” armor. Marida screamed as she saw the funnels gather together to form the shape of a giant hand. *The “Gundam”s the enemy, the terrifying enemy that took away our light.* The memories buried within her inherited genes exploded, and a certain person called Marida reverted back to its original state—

Part 15[edit]

That abnormal scene could be distinguished despite the blurry optical images. As everyone on the bridge held their breaths in anticipation, Angelo continued to stare at the main screen with horror.

“Is that…something that brat’s doing?”

Zinnerman continued to stare at the stiff lights and shadows that were dancing, muttering with a look of utter disbelief. Angelo had no disagreements about this. *If this were that guy’s ability, I would have been shot down during the battle before.* “That’s far from the truth.” Frontal said.

“Once it deems the enemy as a Newtype, the machine’s limitations would be removed, and everything from the movement controls to the weapons controls would be controlled by the system. The pilot here would not even be a system software here. It plays the part of receiving the thought waves and converts them into antagonistic intent.”

“Then, what the heck’s controlling that “Gundam”!?”

“Why, the NT-D. The Newtype-Destroyer System.”

Frontal said nonchalantly, and Angelo gulped the saliva in his mouth as he looked at the side of Frontal’s masked face. “Destroy…?” Zinnerman asked back, frowning.

“That lone-horned will detect the thought waves of the enemy, while

the “Gundam” would be in charge of destroying it. What we see is an interface that uses the Psycoframe to carry out cadence that far exceeds human limits, and also, a hunting machine that’s equipped with the ability to control enemy Psycommu weapons. This Program was created to exterminate the last greatest fable Zeon left behind, Newtypes.”

“This is too ridiculous…it’s impossible for normal humans to pilot such a machine.”

“That’s right. The pilot has to be enhanced. This isn’t a machine a Newtype created by artificial means can pilot, but that a real enhanced being can do.”

The deliberate voice caused Zinnerman, who realized what was going on, to give a tense look on his face, “I see. So it’s a product of technology used to purge Newtypes. In that case…”

“It can bury the fable of Zeon completely.” Frontal followed up and continued, “They wanted to dissolve the Zeon Republic and the Newtype fable together with the 100 year anniversary, and use this to wipe off the nightmare called Zeon completely. As habit, they call this the UC plan.”

UC was an abbreviation of Unicorn, and also, it signified the Universal Century itself. The nightmare that caused the first 100 years to be stained in blood called Zeon shook the foundation of the Universal Century from its base, so they had to remove this nightmare before they welcomed the next hundred years. The theory of evolution human kind would have after entering space was just a fantasy, and the so-called Newtypes were just monsters with ridiculous amounts of fighting abilities. The sayings that Newtype perceptions were outstanding were just rhetorics, and they could overpower it through the power of science and technology. To prove this, a Gundam-type mobile suit would be most fitting. It was a symbolic existence of the Federation, and up till this point, the “Gundam” was a machine that could not be separated from the Newtype fable. Mobile suits with “Gundam” appearances were being mass-produced as part of the Federation army’s realignment, and the power of science alone would be enough to exterminate the monsters. There was no method that was more effective than this political propaganda if they wanted to erase the “Newtype” theory. They would imitate their forefathers who single-handedly built the Federation organization, and this would be the time to take great strides and push for massive changes, all in the name of making sure that Earth would be at peace at the Universal Century’s 100 year anniversary-

Neo Zeon, which was raised as a separatist, tried to maintain an economy that could not last without war on one hand; while on the other hand, such forces were allowed to continue existing because of this trail of thought. Angelo felt that this was not something a sane person would do, and looked horrified at he stared at the “Unicorn Gundam” on the other side. It was a monster born out of the fear of the Newtype theory and Zeon, the source of it. *To think the Federation’s fear for us is so deep…*

“Cardeas Vist installed a mechanism on that monster and left the key to opening the “Laplace Box” to it. Even the activation conditions of the NT-D were modified, so if we want to finish out its true identity, we can only activate the NT-D and let it remove the seal gradually.”

“…In other words, you want Marida to be a sacrificial pawn here!?”

Zinnerman summoned back the killing intent that once faded and gave an ominous look in his eyes. “This is only something she can do.” Frontal emphasized as he stopped Angelo from trying to stand in front of him.

“The Ple series have their hatred and animosity to the “Gundam” ingrained within their consciousness. She’s the only pilot who can draw out the “Unicorn”s true nature and fight it.”

“But Marida’s—”

“Ple Twelve.”

The words interrupt sharply as Frontal stared right back at Zinnerman. “That’s her name. She’s an experimental model codenamed serial number 12 amongst the line of artificial Newtypes that were cloned and genetically modified.”

The mouth that was half-opened, wanting to argue back, closed again, and Zinnerman averted the other person’s stare as he clenched his fist. “Even so, I understand you’ll say that she’s a person.” Frontal said silently.

“But it’s dangerous to put exceeding emotions on her. If the Ple series lose their master, they would be unable to ensure their sense of self. Sometimes, this would create a sense of dependence on the master, especially someone like Ensign Marida who lived through several cruel years for a female—”

“Don’t say it.”

This was a sharp voice that sounded like a knife was placed right at the back of the neck. Angelo glanced back at Frontal’s expression as

he stopped, swallowed his saliva, and glared at Zinnerman, “You dare to be insolent to a superior…!” Zinnerman did not say anything as he suddenly reached out to grab Angelo on the collar.

“It’s because it’s a superior officer that I’m saying such things. It’s not that easy if it’s you.”

Zinnerman reached his thick arm and pushed Angelo into space. Angelo managed to launch on his feet immediately, but he had no strength to argue with Zinnerman, who was giving an ominous look, and could only retreat back behind Frontal, who remained silent and unmoved. Zinnerman looked at them for quite a while, and turned his sights back to the screen where lights of battle were occurring. He suppressed the emotions that were about to explode out right at this point, and his expression that was more serious than usual caused the atmosphere in the bridge to become heavier.

Part 16[edit]

Everything and anything became bloody red through the reddish-black filter; whether it was the 4-winged that was attacked by the automatic cannon pods it released or the dummy balloons that would be crushed the moment the beam sabers touched it. This was not due to the alert image shown on the visor. Perhaps this would be the blood below Banagher’s eyes filling his sights, and he recalled someone telling him this, that the eyes were the weakest organs against the G-force. *Who exactly said it to me—*

This thought was just a little pebble mixed in between amidst the surging impulses. *Destroy the 4-winged and eliminate anything that’s giving off antagonistic intent.* Banagher hurriedly moved the “Unicorn Gundam” as the intensity of the impacts kept shaking his organs. The slashes that crossed by sliced the knee armor of the 4-winged, and the machine that was spurting out conducting fluids spun about in an ugly manner. The left hand was already severed, and the binder with its armor ripped off could not function as per normal. However, this person did not intend to stop resisting. Whenever there was an opening, it would reach out the hidden sub-arms and swing the blade of its beam sabers at the “Unicorn Gundam”s chest.

—The “Gundam”s the enemy!

The monoeye of the 4-winged flashed as it accepted the consciousness of the person within. *That’s too straightforward,* Banagher argued in the corner of his mind. *It’s because you guys are giving off antagonistic intent like this that everything became like this, not just what happened to “Industrial 7”,*

but also forcing me to ride on this thing and take part in this battle.

The "Laplace Box", the Vist Foundation, Neo Zeon, everyone keeps promoting their beliefs and ideals; they wouldn't even listen to anyone else. Nobody wants to listen to me, no one wants to be on my side. Dad's dead, Audrey's gone, why must I bear all these troubles? Why must I suffer such terrifying things alone!? All I want to do is to save Audrey. Why am I still at such a place even when I left Audrey in another guy's hands—!?

The "Gundam"s folded arms expanded out sideways as it sliced off two hidden sub-arms the enemy reached out. The 4-winged staggered back slightly, and the automatic cannon pod array surged forward. They had lost all power in their batteries, but it did not matter to him. *Go on, wreck the enemy!* Banagher muttered silently in his mind, and the automatic cannons that were afflicted by this destructive impulse started to charge at the 4-winged.

The impacts of the sparks appeared, and the 4-winged that was desperately swinging its beam saber staggered as it tilted. The tattered binders were overlapped in front of the body, and the 4-winged that was reduced to a short and stout humanoid figure continued to be knocked back by the funnels. Banagher realized that his lips were curling up as he let the "Unicorn Gundam" rush right at the enemy. The machine spun like a top as it touched the 4-winged, and the 4-winged's hand wielding the beam saber was knocked back into space.

The 4 beam cannons on the torso were also hacked apart, and the machine that lost its almost all its weapons bent backwards. Banagher looked at the enemy that could not use the AMBAC function and had its last sub-arm sliced by the cross-beam sabers. He used this impulse to aim the cursor at the cockpit of the 4-winged.

There was a source of antagonistic intent from within the cockpit cover, unnerving him. The nerves that were on the same length as the sensors captured the position, and the Psycoframe got right in front of the 4-winged as it reflected the pilot's will. The "Unicorn Gundam" cleared off the conducting fluids and broken bits of armor around it, and just when it was about to stab the beam saber through the cockpit, there was an 'air' that came fluttering out of the machine, letting Banagher know it was a sweet aroma that was teasing his nose.

This is a smell I recognize. The moment he thought about that, a soft flash appeared around Banagher's forehead, and time stood still. Everything stood still, from the 4-winged that remained exposed defenseless, the beam saber that was about to stab through the cockpit, and even the particles that were forming a shot that was

released. The light glow that radiated at his forehead reached forward. That light mixed into together with the a'ir' released by the 4-winged, forming a 'forcefield' that surrounded the two mobile suits. This 'forcefield' removed the bloody color in Banagher's sight and expanded out together with the soft light—

—Light…!

Someone called out. A girl's voice? Perhaps it's my own voice. That might not be a voice if I look at things further. The 4-winged in front of him was basked in light, and the antagonistic intent clinging onto the skin faded away like fog as the existence within the enemy's cockpit closed in on him. *What's going on? Who's intending to enter my body?* Banagher could only look around as his head was fastened on the headrest, and he saw the linear seat with light behind it.

—You're the light that came to free me. Have you came to receive me?

Marida Cruz was seated on the linear seat weakly, giving a weak smile right back at Banagher. to him, the profile of the girl reaching her hand out to him was like a girl of around 10 years old.

—Who, are you?

Banagher too reached his hand out to the girl smiling back at him on the other side. The light dipped, and their thoughts were immersed into the bottom of the icy cold water as though the water surface was blown apart.

Light. A white light that was just born.

Banagher saw the white and transparent light that was shown on the surface. The feeling gradually rose from his body as it left the empty depth. The hand that reached out from the water surface immediately felt the cold air from the outside, and Marida felt an unknown hand pull her up. This was the first time she felt human warmth…

“Welcome to this world. Do you feel cold?”

The blond boy that reached his hand out smiled at her. The neat room that was surrounded by white light had several casket-like capsules laid out, and it seemed that she was obtained from one of them. Banagher looked at the face of the young man wearing a Neo Zeon

uniform, and Marida felt a chill from this young man's expression that was colder than the surrounding temperature.

"You're the 12th sister. Your sisters are working outside. Come together with me to the outside world."

The boy held her hand, and it felt warm. Marida got up from the capsule and as her bare foot that touched the outside air touched the floor, she instinctively understood that this man was her master. *Is that how it is?* Banagher had some doubts as he wondered how her consciousness entered his mind. There was a girl around 10 years old with blue eyes shown right in front of him—

Light. A savage and violent light that radiated through space.

That kind of light that appeared on the all-view monitor was a light of explosion. "Ple Three is killed!" Banagher and Marida were inside the cockpit as they heard the girl call out.

"Master's dead too. He's dead!"

"What should we do?"

"Calm down. There're still enemies left on the battlefield. We have to purge the Federation. We have to eliminate all of master's enemies, whether it's the "Gundam" or Haman!"

The 4th sister called out, and the sisters regained some calmness. The black mobile suits became their limbs, and the binders that were extended out from their shoulders made them look like machines with wings. The sisters lined up and attacked the enemy, understanding what to do. *We just needed to use the funnels to get rid of anything that gives any antagonistic intent. We're not complete, but we can do it. We're created to do it.*

But what exactly is the enemy? Marida thought as she joined the line unconditionally. *Is it something that's hurting master? Is it something master deems to be a target? We were trained all this while to protect master, we take quite a few painful injections nowadays, our minds are stuffed with so much knowledge they can blow up, but I can endure it all for the sake of master. My sister with the same faces and abilities are also following master, like how they were pursuing that light when they were born. Service and dedication were the only values we were taught.*

But that master who taught us this isn't around. Do we still have to fight when master's not around? Even though we're all designed to be in

the same form, all of us are different. The 6th sister would call herself 'this me', while I call myself 'I'. We're all multiplied from a single source, and we received similar training, but we're different individuals. I heard from the doctor before that this is an individual difference. I heard of this term 'soul' before. Everyone's different, and there will be as many different things as there are people. Are our souls the same? Are souls lonely? Even though we have so many people, I still feel very lonely…

Nobody said anything about this, but there was this feeling. They could not hide the wavering of their minds caused by the loss of their master, this core of their lives. Their mobile suits movements were obviously slow, and they would be massacred if they gathered together. The 12th sister broke the rule for the first time as she was the only one to leave the line a little.

In an instant, a beam of light ripped through space, and the black mobile suits were devoured. The mobile suit was ripped apart by the mega particles that scattered and came in from all directions, and she was thrown out into space.

The all-view monitor was swtiched off, and the cockpit, which was covered in darkness, spun around. It was severed; Marida's bond with the sisters and the machines were forcefully severed as everything else was returned to Heaven. She desperately reached out her hand, searching for greenery amidst the darkness. The weakly flickering alert image caused the hand that was grabbing emptiness to appear—

Light. Lewd, vulgar and contemptible neon lights.

There were several bars lined up along a street on this secluded area. The scene changed to a corner of a bustling street that had corroded vomit and stenches of pee. A middle-aged woman with her back facing the neon lights frowned as she said, "This kid stinks!"

"She's just a kid. It's impossible to sell her like this."

"There are customers who like such things, right? She was seated in an escape pod when I picked her up. It seems that she went completely bonkers here. Her mind's all blank, so she'll listen to anything no matter what!"

The woman looked at the girl's face. There was an irritating smell of perfume moving up the girl's nose, and though she thought that this was basically the smell of a toilet air freshener, her body and mind would not react. The woman clicked her tongues as she hummed,

nudged the girl by the head and pushed her into the shop. The girl's swaying footsteps stepped right into the water puddles, and the neon lights reflected off the water surfaces shook as well.

Banagher and Marida were staring at the girl's face there. That dirty face with a head full of unkempt long hair was facing them. The 12th position underaged girl remained defenseless as her body remained there, looking up at a certain spot in the sky…

"So then."

The man received some money from the woman and hurriedly left. *The man who pulled me out from the darkness of the cockpit, the man who should me my new master is leaving.* Master; the girl pursued after the man as she gave a voice from her throat. "I'm your master from today on!" The woman grabbed the girl by the shoulder and exhaled a smelly fat smell.

Master. She would not be able to survive without her master, the one thing bonding her to this world. But as the girl was about to step into that world, her master would change every night. Her new mission was to accept any requests the master made and satisfy them. They would be rotten slugs licking all over her, and after everything ended, the girl would feel that she was garbage. The dirty water accumulated within her, and her sense of existence would gradually vanish. Finally, what was left was the bag of dirty water under the raw skin that accumulated.

However, I had to listen to master. That's because I'm alone. There's no difference between getting into a mobile suit to fight and serving different masters every day as I can't let my own will interfere. In the end, artificially created beings don't need wills. I should have just followed orders to serve and dedicate like my sisters, and I wouldn't be left behind as a result.

The cheap bed let out a creaking sound, and the smelly stench blew all over her face. She endured the backlash from the lone intention she accidentally had, and at this moment, the hollow blue eyes were looking at the ceiling that was swaying up and down. The rotten smell felt like it was corroding her body, and it became her smell—

Light. Icy cold light that represented loss.

She could see the white ceiling. It was the ceiling of a treatment room that looked much poorer and dirtier than a Neo Zeon medical facility. The bald man in white clothes mused with a tired voice, "She's still so

young…”

The silver washbasin that was placed beside the bed vaguely reflected her face. The 12th sister body that became 15 years old was lying on the bed, and she blankly opened her numb and dazed yes. Her expression suddenly tensed up, and her hand that searched for the thing under the lower abdomen froze.

It was gone. It was stolen. Something that grew under the body, that certain thing that was becoming bigger bit by bit was taken away. The girl did not know what it was, but she understood that something very important was already…

The man who looked like a doctor walked out from the curtain, and she could see the treatment table that had apparatus to fix the legs down. The syringes, scissors and a hook shaped rod were left on the table without much thought. *Did that thing pull it out?* The moment she made that guess, she was prompted by fear as she nearly screamed, and her body nearly rolled off the bed and landed on the floor. She could not stop shuddering, and what rose up within her was a feeling a disgust. Someone secretly dug out something from her body, and the unforgettable pain spread through her body.

What exactly, have I lost? The words were formed within her chest, but she was unable to convert them into words, and she was carried out of the treatment room by the doctor. “You didn’t hurt the product, did you?” the middle aged woman waiting in the standby room was smoking there “No, but…” the woman did not really look at the doctor who answered “Then, let’s go back.” as she merely turned behind. The 12th sister stopped in her tracks as she stared at the woman.

Her body felt weird ever since a while ago. She felt something around her stomach forming, and her periods stopped as well. *What is it? I hope I can put it back if I can. That’s a part of me, and it’s definitely something important.* The girl turned her voice that was not released into a stare, and the middle-aged woman momentarily changed expressions as she looked over, “Let’s go. What are you doing!” The woman commanded her as she pulled the girl, and the girl could only stutter over.

“THAT HEAVY STONE WAS TAKEN AWAY, RIGHT? SO COME HERE, YOU!!”

The woman screamed hoarsely as she tried to pull the girl’s body as she remained rooted to the floor. *No, that’s not a huge stone.* The voice in her chest never materialized itself in the end as she was pulled onto a dilapidated street. She was pulled onto an electric car

that was parked beside the street, and the car moved towards the bustling street the shop was. The usual and mundane street scenes passed by outside the window, and the complex looks people had passed by. The bicycles were gathered together, the children were running around on the streets, a young mother was pushing a baby car, a baby was crying there…

These scenes passed by in a blur, wet manner, and icy cold water flowed down her cheeks. Tears. She never cried when she lost her master and her sisters. *She didn't bear a child willingly.* Banagher continued to feel them flow down the blue hollows as he thought. *However, whether I was willing or not, it was still a 'light'.* Marida's thoughts answered. A 'light' was born within an artificial being's body, and it was much more dazzling than any light she had seen till this point. It could have been a 'light' that could light this dull, dark and cold world.

That thought can be considered the selfishness of a mother. The two thoughts continued to merge with each other as they toyed with each other *That may be true, but I still want to rely on this 'light'. That's because souls' are lonely…* and tears continued to roll down the girl's cheeks as she touched the lower abdomen where there was no heat left. Her teary face was reflected off the car window, and the wet reflected image disintegrated—

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU! BARGING INTO OUR SHOP LIKE THAT!"

"SHUT UP! YOU OLD HAG! YOU'RE TREATING A BRAT AS A THING HERE! IF YOU DON'T MOVE ASIDE, I'LL WRECK THIS SHOP!"

Someone roared. The girl raised her lazy body and she sat up and looked at the metal door on the dirty wall. The high decibel sounds rattled through the door, and the shocked mice hurriedly scampered away.

The bottle that was used to store urine was toppled onto the floor, and the stains spread on the floor as a result. *I'll be beaten if I don't hurry up and clean up.* The girl thought, but she had no strength to get off the bed. *How long has it been since that unlicensed doctor pulled that stone out of my stomach?* That girl's body was wrecked ever since then, and she could only remain in this underground room and lie around like a slob. *As I expected, that was my other half.* The 12th sister stared at her skinny hand that was like an old person, giving an unconcerned look as she heard the noise outside. This bag where the

other half of the body was ripped off could not even contain the dirty water anymore. The body that inhaled the damp air of the underground room was just a pile of sodden residue.

GATAK. The sound that shook the room rang, and the metal door was opened. The light from the corridor shone into the room, and the girl could not help but use her hands to cover her face. It was a light that was overly bright to her eyes as she had never seen the sun for several days. A man was standing there with his back facing the light. The man was about to step into the room, but hesitated as he used his hand to cover his nose, and the urine bottle the mice toppled was lying there. The man looked at the girl and said “it’s her.”, while another hulking figure appeared there.

That person never showed any signs of disgust with regards to the puddles at his feet and the stench that filled the room as he gradually approached the girl. *Is this man tonight’s master?* The girl understood this, and her body moved on her own as she stood on the icy cold floor. As the sweaty and stained clothes slid off, the girl faced them while being completely naked. Perhaps those figures gasped because of the bruises all over her body? The girl was slightly relaxed as she knew that this master did not seem to have that kind of interest. Her current situation was such that she probably would not be able to finish those bondage or beaten missions…

“HOLD ON A MOMENT! THERE’S A SCARY BIG BROTHER WATCHING OVER THIS SHOP! GET AWAY FROM THAT GIRL RIGHT NOW!”

The woman screamed outside the room. The man silently picked up the towel beside the bed and draped over gently over the girl.

“I’m taking this girl away.” This voice echoed through the room, and the face that was covered in thick sturdy beard entered the girl’s gaze.

“This girl’s our military’s property. Thank you for taking care of her.”

The infuriated face that was of stark contrast to the deep, calm voice filled the man’s face. “WHAT’S WITH THE INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ARMY? ARE YOU THE DEFEATED SOLDIERS OF ZEON? I’LL CALL THE COPS THEN…” the woman said that, and the man’s voice interrupted, “Try it if you dare.” and the grip of the handgun in the man’s clutches was shaking in front of the girl.

“I’m very angry now. It doesn't matter whether it’s the police or the mafia here; I can kill a hundred of them in my state of mind right now. Don’t piss me off.”

The other man pulled the woman, who shut up and retreated back, onto the floor, and screams and growls gradually faded away. The girl did not mind the noises as she walked towards the bearded man in the room. The towel draped over her body slid off, and the skinny girl stepped on it. As the girl reached her hand out, intending to touch the face's bearded face, the man seemed to force out the words "That's enough" as he used his wide hands to grab the girl's arms.

"You don't have to do such things anymore. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry…"

The face with the light behind looked down, and the eyes of the man that were holding onto the girl's arms tightly showed a slightly glowing thing. *Why is this man apologizing? And why is he crying?* The doubts that passed through the girl's mind was merged together with the heat that resonance, and her matching blue hollows continued to stare at the man's face. The girl had been hugged by many masters before, but no one held her arms so forcefully and yet so gently.

However, the girl could recognize this warmth. A long time ago, a hand reached out to her from the water surface. The warmth of the human hand she touched when she was pulled out from the capsule was about the same as this so as this hand. The girl focused all her consciousness on the thick and hard hand of the man. Warmth flowed out from there, and as she felt the cells within her shaking, the girl looked up at the man's eyes. The slightly wet man's eyes reflected her black and dirty face. *Who are you?* The girl tried to ask.

I'm me. The her present in the eyes answered. *You're not the 12th sister, but a one and only existence granted the name of Marida Cruz. You have a real master, so you must live for master. Don't live on because you're created this way, but give your all to serve your master.*

This warmth is the real 'light', the one and only 'light' that reached into this darkness. Don't let go of this 'light'. Go do what master hopes for you to do, fight master's enemies until this body of yours get burned one day, and all your sins and guilt return to nothingness— Marida's thoughts were calling out within Zinnerman's eyes *That's just a curse on yourself!* Banagher's thoughts interrupted at this point. *That's just a curse you set on yourself. The Captain doesn't want you to do that in the first place.*

I know. You're right. But I said it before, didn't I? Righteousness might not be the only thing that can save humanity… Marida's retorting thoughts merged into the light, surrounding the girl that was standing blankly in the underground room. The white light covered the entire

room, and the girl o opened her arms wide let out tears, and Banagher saw the light transform into heat as it evaporated the tears.

Light. A purifying light that burned all sins and guilt—

This was a sensation that happened within a hundredth of a second.

The mega-particles cackled as they scattered, and the blade of the beam saber was pointed at the cockpit of the 4-winged. Banagher recognized Marida's existence inside the cockpit, got back his physical senses and pushed the control stick down with full intention.

The "NT-D" sign continued to flicker as the machine braked suddenly, and the impacts echoed within the machine. Marida was not moving, and her deep blue eyes were looking at the sky, waiting for the light closing in on her to swallow her. She was waiting for the 'light' that could undo the curse she set on herself, one that would burn the grime inside her body. She was waiting for her battered heart and body to return to nothingness, just like the girl that was lying on the floor of the dim underground room.

Since where is there this kind of redemption? Banagher yelled in his thoughts with all he hand as he tried to make the rioting machine stop. *I understand you, whether dream-wise or illusion-wise. When our thoughts overlapped and resonance in that sensation, I saw your existence. Humans can understand each other—and that is the real 'light'. What you want to redeem you is to reveal the possibility that's dormant and release the inner god within you. However, you only looked at your past—*

The filling thoughts became a light and was released from the Psycoframe. However, despite slowing down, the "Unicorn Gundam" never slowed down in its moments. The pilot's will clashed with the system, and the machine ended up in a state where it could not control itself as its inertia forced it to rush right at the 4-winged. There was just a few meters left before contact—*I definitely won't allow you to get killed. You wild horse, listen to me!* Banagher exerted all the strength in his body to put the control stick down to the maximum and shouted out with all his emotions,

"STOP IT!!!"

The blade of the beam saber beamed the 4-winged's cockpit hatch, and the Gundarium metals were ripped out as well. At that moment, the beam saber suddenly vanished, and the scorching hot grip was left as it touched the 4-winged's abdomen. The "Unicorn Gundam"

followed its momentum as it slammed right into the 4-winged, and the two giants got tangled together as they stopped their movements, clinging onto each other as they floated along with the inertia of the impact in space.

The red phosphorus light quickly faded, and the dual-eye sensors changed back to its original green color. The face cover then slid off, the V-shaped multi-blade antenna became one, and the light disappeared from the “Unicorn” that lost its “Gundam” form. The helmet attachments were removed, and Banagher bent his body that was practically lying down, puking out the stomach juices that rose up in him.

He took off his helmet, and his back rose up and down as he panted heavily. He coughed a few times, wiped his face that was dirtied by sweat and vomit, and noticed a water droplet, different from sweat, lying beside his eyes. It was not water from his body, but from within his heart. The memories ingrained in the other person’s mind released a form of painful heat and created a resonance in his brain, forming a drop of tear on his eyeballs…

What kind of experience was that? Banagher rubbed his eyes and searched through his memories that were just about to start fading from his impressions as he stared at the 4-winged in front of him. The machine had all sorts of short-circuited sparks spurting out from all over, and as the monoeye was switched off, the face of the giant that was lowered showed no signs of the monstrous look it had when it destroyed “Industrial 7”. The battered, weary and unsupported mobile suit floated within Banagher’s sights, overlapping together with the thoroughly battered naked girl, and the deep blue eyes of the girl that swallowed all filth were giving off cold air, “Miss Marida…” Banagher could not help but call out. The voice should have been heard through the communication channel, but there was no reply.

The cockpit functions might have been destroyed after taking so much damage. The burnt, dented cockpit cover remained as it was. Banagher looked away from the machine that might have took lots of damage, and looked up the moment he vaguely heard some coughing sounds.

(…Only humans, have gods…)

The weak voice rang through the communication channel. Banagher held his breath as he listened to Marida’s voices.

(The ideals they want to describe, the power to approach their ideals… even artificial beings have them…)

Banagher recognized these words—he accidentally blurted these words his father said when he faced that chapel. At this moment, what he heard were the words that followed, these words only he should know, and he lost his voice.

Marida knew these words, and just like he understood her, she understood him. Marida was within him, and he was within Marida…

Suddenly, an intense emotion that could not be suppressed rose up Banagher's throat, and he clenched his trembling fists. He understood that she was trembling inside him. The strong-willed spirit that harbored the deep abyss of loss, who would not say that she was hurting even though she was, who would not say that she was suffering even though she was, was trembling. *What should I say to someone who's hurt so deeply? I just feel more distant after entering her heart; how can I face this loneliness and sadness—*

"Ev…even if…you do this because of this, it's still not right. Killing off your means to continue living…it's just too sad…"

The useless words came out, and the helpless tears seeped out as they wet his eyes. Banagher could not say anything. An impulse he could not control rose up his body, and he became one of the many people who tortured her through violence; he had no right to criticize the world for being unreasonable. Marida suddenly smiled and said, (Righteousness might not be the only thing that can save humanity…)

(However…I feel that it's good that you can say 'even so' like that…)

A feeling of respect came from deep within Marida's thoroughly battered, crushed heart and soul. The voice she eked out crushed Banagher's heart as he mused, "That's enough, don't talk anymore." as he lowered his eyes that were rolling out hot passion in a flowing manner. *You're not an artificial being. You're more human than any human.* This intent reached the "Unicorn"s skeletal frame, and both hands moved on its own as it cuddled the 4-winged machine into its clutches.

The fires of the battle ended, and as both allies and foes vanished in this starry sea, the two mobile suits embracing each other floated around. The "Unicorn" cockpit finally received its allied unit's laser signal, telling Banagher that there was a Federation machine approaching him.

The marker indicating the "Nahel Argama" gradually approached Banagher from behind, but despite the calls the Federation machine started making through the wireless communicator, the "Unicorn" and

the 4-winged di not move. The two machines floated around, entrusting themselves to each other with “Palau”, covered with dust, lying in the background. The patrolling Federation unit seemed puzzled as it let out burner flares. The weak light surrounded the two still machines, but it could not prevent the scars from appearing in space.

Part 17[edit]

“We lost response from the “Kshatriya”. It’s taken by the enemy ship.”

“The signal from the Psyco Monitor is cut. There’s no change in the Laplace Program. The seal’s still in the same state.”

The operators’ voices rang, and Angelo looked around as if he just woke up from a dream before looking back at the main screen.

The white hull could be seen moving to the enemy ship on the zoomed-in visual that was full of noise. It seemed that the “Unicorn” and the “Kshatriya” were left on the rear deck, but the interference of the block noise made it hard to tell. *How long did my consciousness fly off?* Angelo shook his numb head, which was still somewhat numb, as he wiped away the sweat on his forehead, and lifted his head on hearing Frontal’s words, “Of course.”

“So if we don’t move to the targeted coordinates, the program won’t move onto the next step even if we activate the NT-D?”

Frontal continued to stare at the screen, and had no other thoughts. The moment the “Unicorn” touched the “Kshatriya”, time stood still, and a suffocating feeling that stuffed their chests surrounded the “Rewloola”s bridge. *Did Frontal not experience that kind of inexplicable feeling?* As he thought about that, Angelo saw Zinnerman leave the scene wordlessly, and grabbed his shoulder. “Where are you going to, Captain?” In response to these words, Zinnerman shot a vicious look at him.

“Prompt action, of course. I’m going to get Marida back.”

The shoulder Angelo was touching gave off an electric jolt filled with killing intent, and he inadvertently released his hand. Zinnerman used his glare to force aside the bridge crew out of his way as he stepped on the floor and let his massive body float to the do. “Wait! The pursuit order’s not…” Angelo did not have the courage to touch his shoulder as he tried to call the other party, “It’s alright.” But Frontal interrupted the words he was going to say.

“We’ll have the “Garencieres” take charge of tracking down the enemy ship’s whereabouts, but be careful.”

The voice that came from below the mask caused Angelo to understand that there was no intent to lead the fleet and pursue them. He looked over at Frontal with a probing expression, and Zinnerman, who turned his face full of restrained killing intent, “Yes.” muttered as he left the ship. At this point, the Garencieres had lost its main fighting strength, the “Kshatriya”, and had only 3 “Geara Zulus” left as part of its fighting force. Angelo looked at the old ship model that was connected to the side of the “Rewloola” through the monitor, and the captain, who might launch some special assault, could be moving through it. He asked, “Is it okay?” and Frontal used his hand to stroke his chin.

“There’s a need to send someone to send the signals from the Psyco Monitor. The “Garencieres” is suited for this job. The coordinates the Laplace Program indicated isn’t a place where we can send in a large fleet easily.”

Frontal looked up at the input coordinates blinking on the navigation screen, and curled his lips with a self-mocking flair. The coordinates suspected to be where the “Laplace Box” seemed to be an overly dangerous place if they wanted to carry out a military operation here. Perhaps Frontal, who believed that a disguised transport ship could do the job, predicted such a predicament? Even if the release of the “Unicorn” and the reading of its data was just as planned, the capture of the “Kshatriya” by the enemy would be unexpected here. Angeo saw that the masked face showed no expression on the side, and could only look back at the enemy ship that was gradually moving away and put his hand on his heart that had yet to calm down.

Despite the battle that was happening, Marida and Banagher had an intense exchange of senses, and Zinnerman did not hid his killing intent in his eyes as he glared at Angelo. *Have I enjoyed such deep emotions with others that were so intense? No, what I should ask is, will I get this kind of relationship in the future?* Angelo could not find the answer from this red silhouette which seemed to be living in another dimension, and he turned his fleeting stare outside the window, into the vacuum.

Part 18[edit]

“The pilot’s fine too, right? …I understand. We hope to follow along when we inspect the enemy unit. Please be careful with dealing with it; that’s all I have to tell the captain. Over and out.”

The communication ended as they moved at a similar relative speed to the waverider, and the hands fastened themselves on the grip on top of the machine. After contacting the “Nahel Argama”, Daguza stared at

“Palau”, which was moving further away from the “Loto”s driver seat. The enemy fleet never did anything, and there were no signs of enemy suits pursuing. “Palau”, which had cleared itself from its military functions, appeared on the back surveillance monitor through the thin layer of legoliths.

Amongst the ECOAS729 squad that went off first, the “Loto” managed to make contact with the mothership, and the “Unicorn” safely. Their initial objectives were reached, but to Daguza and the rest who were mentally prepared to die as they charged into “Palau”, it felt like they were let off easily in this situation. Banagher Links did not follow the spy’s instructions, but boarded the “Unicorn” itself and even took the 4-winged back to the ship as a bonus. *What in the world happened for him to do such things?* Despite being willing to accept all outcomes, it seemed that Conroy himself could not view this objectively. “Things really developed well.” There was an abnormal heaviness in his voice.

“That four-winged seemed like it was deliberately left there…let’s hope they don’t pull a joke on us like putting a bomb in it.”

“I don’t think that they need to deliberately come up with some tricks since they can sink a ship like the “Nahel Argama” easily, but Banagher might have been released deliberately.”

“That means those guys will still come after us, right? Those bastards.”

Conroy answered cautiously as he pointed the cursor of the rear surveillance monitor to the southernmost side. Including the dummy ships, there were more than 20 enemy ships that predicted the raid and moved out of the dock. If they wanted to, they could have destroyed the “Nahel Argama” whenever they wanted to. Considering how the enemy left them off, the assumption that Neo Zeon could not analyze the Laplace Program would be correct here. They probably intended to let the “Nahel Argama” and the “Unicorn” go before snatching the “Box” back at the crucial moment.

So we’re still being toyed by the enemy, huh? Daguza clenched his left hand that did not have its cast removed yet as he sighed lightly, “However, I don’t think this mission was in vain” but Conroy’s words surprised him.

“Without the 729 fighting a way out for us, the “Unicorn” wouldn’t have the chance to escape.”

Despite knowing that the enemy planned for this, Conroy still concluded so with a stiff voice. Nasri’s “Loto” had broken communications with them, and they could not retrieve a signal piece

of debris. “Of course.” Daguza answered with a similar stiff voice and closed his eyes for a while. From the communication channel, they heard news that three other allied units were missing. One of them was the “Delta Plus” that Ensign Riddhe Marcenas, who ‘returned back’, rode on.”

“…You have to come with us, Nasri.”

Daguza muttered and opened his eyes. He saw the hull of the “Nahel Argama” that lost its portside catapult, and there was a ghost-like ship floating on the monitor.

Part 19[edit]

Think. The shaking machine interrupted Mineva’s sleep, and she woke up.

The narrow cockpit was filled with the sound from the generator, and the walls of the all-view monitor were filled by the CG space. She could not feel any G-force striking her, and she could not see any debris or anything as such. *Have we passed through the shoal space region?* Mineva inspected her body that seemed to have passed out before, and opened the helmet visor, only to blink when she saw the drinking tube that was handed right in front of her.

“Is there any part of your body hurting now?”

Riddhe, who was sitting on the linear seat, gave Mineva a concerned look. The acceleration of the mass driver was overly powerful, and darkness surrounded Mineva’s eyes as she experienced the fear of nearly sinking into the seat. *How long have I passed out?* Mineva took the drinking tube and answered, “I’m fine” as she started drinking. The sensation of her gullet throbbing, a feature zero gravity had, reached her throat, and her blurred consciousness became awake as a result.

“The battle’s over. It seems the “Gundam” was taken in by the “Nahel Argama”, though I really could see it properly.”

Riddhe turned his eyes forward and started drinking from the tube. “We broke off laser communication here. Nobody’s pursuing us. They probably think we’re dead now.”

The self-mocking voice had a sense of burden, one which a soldier knew that he was doing something improper. Mineva did not feel that any spoken apology would have worked as she muttered softly, “…Is that so?” as she looked over at “Palau” which was becoming distant.

The silhouette of “Palau” became smaller than a pinkie’s fingertip as it was buried amongst the stars, and it was impossible to distinguish the shape clearly. *What exactly did I betray, and what did I leave behind to come all the way here?* Mineva could not arrange her thoughts in this situation as she harbored restlessness over her ignorance. She stared at the “Palau”, and the words “Don’t look back” caused her shoulders to jolt.

“We can only move forward, whether it’s you, or me…”

Riddhe said, using a tone that seemed to be an attempt to convince himself as he exerted force on the control stick. Mineva did not say anything as she looked back forward.

There was an azure blue light, the size of a tennis ball, sparkling before the endlessly expanding space, floating in space in a middle manner. *That place is the start of everything, a place we have to return to*— Mineva mused in her chest unwittingly, and the “Delta Plus”, which transformed into a waverider form, continued to sprint through the eternal darkness. The Earth looked like it was ignoring the disputes that happened in space as it radiated a one and only light, waiting in front of the duo.

Volume 5 – The Ghost of Laplace

Chapter 1[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The confetti continued to dance in the air like snow. The fragments that covered the sky were scattered over, mixing together with the cheers of the people, forming a vortex. This vortex rose up due to the wind currents of the artificial airflow, and the multi-colored powder of light swayed as it rose up the colony's sky.

Right, left, right, left. Suberoa Zinnerman recited as he marched at the same pace as his breathing, darting his eyes as he tried to look at the crowd that was moving by. There were young children holding military flags and old people with their backs arched, looking like soldiers who returned to their hometown. A woman poked her head out from amidst the human wall, waving a handkerchief, and she was probably looking for her lover amongst the squad that came back. Zinnerman immediately looked around to check that there were no stupid soldiers who would wave back at the woman.

There were no radicals that could be seen messing up the formations' proceedings. All the soldiers wore metal helmets that covered their ears and necks and their secondary combat uniform. They were equipped with rifles that worked under gravity, slung on their shoulders, and they turned their tense expressions before. Right, left, right left. Zinnerman saw that they did not mess up in their marching, and secretly felt relieved that the special training was taking effect. The newly gathered recruits formed more than half their ranks, and old experienced officers like Zinnerman had always been guiding the actions of these rookies, training them until they could attend a parade, whether it was in the past, or at this point. He finally managed to train them to a decent level, including the newly-appointed squad leaders who had brand new officer-use mantles on them. Feeling satisfied, Zinnerman looked over at the other end where the formation was, the large building located at the end of the avenue.

The Chancellor Government Building, which thoroughly displayed the splendor of capital of the Principality of Zeon "Zum City", was a large building that had 3 sharp towers on the tip of the chalice-like structure, built in a complicated planar structure, and it looked like an angry man's face when seen from the front. *To think that I would be marveling at this Zeonism cultural promotion at its finest, the government office where Chancellor Degwin Zabi lives in.* Zinnerman never thought that this day would calm, and as he secretly tried to suppress the agitation as he was about to laugh out, he continued to divert his eyes onto both sides of the avenue. The confetti continued to fall like snow, and the brick houses that were built in the style of European streets were lined side by side with each other, and the banners that were dropped down from the windows had large

handwritten words on them. There were words like “Beat the Earth Federation Government!” “Let the Principality of Zeon gain real independence!”. There was a satirical image of a Federation soldier hanging onto Earth on a banner with the words “Save our national patriots!”, and on it, there was an illustration of a mobile suit that looked like a “Zack” point its machine gun at them.

Save our national patriots, huh? That doesn’t sound bad. Zinnerman thought. It had been more than 20 years since he, a gruff person of no education and charisma, joined the Principality of Zeon Defense force. For a man like him, who would have ended up as a mob member if he did not do this, those overbearing words would be tough to live up to. This place was changed into a Principality after Zeon Deikun died, and as drastic things happened, including the growth of the national army, they had to withstand the financial sanctions from the Federation government. Even though the hopes of colony self-government they betted on were trampled on, even though they endured oppression after oppression, even though the days of hibernation would continue —this day would be a glorious day for these people who were already prepared to live their lives like this.

It was January 3rd, Universal Century 0079. The fuse signaling Zeon’s war for independence was lit when Operation British started at a lightning-quick speed. The Sides that were allied with the Federation were crushed, and Earth took a severe hit due to the colony drops. *It will be our turn next; the mission entrusted to us will be to bear the fate of the Principality and fight into enemy ranks. What other stage allows old-timers like us to perform when we offer no advantage besides our determination?*

“It has been a month since the war started. With every soldier’s rigorous pro-activeness, our Zeon Principality had finally suppressed the Earth Federation government as we hoped. But we still have to win this tough battle if we want the Federation to succumb, and for us to fulfill the ideals of our founding father Zeon Deikun.”

Supreme Commander Gihren Zabi said as he faced the thousands of soldiers located at the plaza in front of the Government Building. Zinnerman could not even see the live broadcast on the large television screens, let alone see him talk on the stage. He pricked his ears to listen to the loud baritone, stared at the wall of spectators waving their right hands, and looked for the petite figure of his wife, who should be here to send him off.

With the help of the squadron leader, a close friend, all officers’ families would have special treatment, so there was no reason for her

to be behind the human wall. His wife, Fee, who had been supporting him for many years through, and his lone daughter, Marie, who he finally got the chance to meet after a long time, were supposed to be there. *Where are they—?*

“There was a saying that this one month war caused half the human population to die off. Because of this, many theories have slandered us, the Principality of Zeon, as mass murderers that humanity had never seen before. But is that really true? About 100 years ago, humanity, which had worn out Earth to its limits, found a new lease of lease by sending the overflowing populace into space. This itself is a good thing, and it is worth mentioning as an accomplishment for human civilization. But in the long history natural ecosystem, only humanity continued to grow in size. Is this not a blasphemy against naturalism? Humanity followed its own desires without reflecting, and the results of pushing our living sphere into space is that we created a group of privileged people that controls Earth. They created an inapt government that created the laws that would protect the Federation, and believed that they could control space from Earth. They even carried out used the term ‘absolute democracy’ to cover the fact that they’re a bureaucracy, and even used the resources obtained from space to develop Earth. This act itself is foolishness even as compared to a reversal of priorities!

Now is the time for humanity to look at itself again. As part of the natural ecosystem, we should remain humble to nature, to Earth. If we consider this viewpoint, can’t we view 5 billion people’s deaths as atonement that humanity should do to nature? If that’s the case, the responsibility given to us is a huge one. With countless sacrifices as our basis, we have been given the responsibility to create a new management system that allows humanity to live on forever.”

Found them. Zinnerman saw the familiar faces from amidst the faces in the human wall that were the size of beans, and swallowed his voice that was about to come out from his throat. Fee, who was wearing a new coat she bought for this day, had put in effort to doll herself up as she smiled. Perhaps she noticed him here? Marie, who just passed her fifth birthday, was held in her mother’s hands, and it seemed like she was waving a military flag at him. *Those plump and soft arms…!*

“To all officers and soldiers gathered here, you have the honor of leading the invasion on Earth. Basically everyone has no experience of standing on Earth, and we have never seen the light of Earth for ourselves. I suppose that everyone will not be at peace, as we’re about to enter an unknown world, enemy territory.

But I hope that you do not forget about the founding ambition of Zeon. Do not forget what Zeon Deikun said, that the humans who come to space will revolutionized. This Side 3 on the back of the Moon is furthest from Earth, and amongst the people that were released into space, we're the lowest level of ***Spacenoids****. But because of that, we can become an outstanding race that can manage the next generation of Earth. We're the chosen people who can view humanity objectively through the depths of space."*

The baritone increased in intensity, and the air that was concealed within "Zum City" rumbled. *Is that the usual most outstanding humanity survival he's good at again? No need to go about with those extra reasons, just tell us to win the battle for our country and for our families, right?* Zinnerman grumbled somewhat unhappily in his heart as he continued to glance aside at his wife, and as expected, they noticed him. He could see that Marie was throwing a tantrum, wanting to get to her father. *It'll be great if I can go over there to carry her—*

"Everyone, we are not invaders. We are descending on Earth to educate people and liberate them from the weak and corrupted hands of the Federation. As long as we, the superior ones, are the ones managing, humanity can approach a real utopia. Sieg Zeon!"

The cheers rained down at this moment, and several hundred thousand people's passionate cheers rocked the entire colony. Sieg Zeon, Sieg Zeon. Zinnerman, who got caught in the passionate cheers as he raised his hands, suddenly felt uneasy as he felt concerned about his wife. He could not see the faces of Fee's group as they were covered by the numerous fists. The crowd that was riled up emotionally by Gihren were only concerned about getting engrossed in his words, creating a riot that gradually swallowed his wife and daughter.

CALM DOWN, YOU PEOPLE! THERE'S A KID HERE! Zinnerman felt a chill from the rumbling and howling crowd as he only cared about looking for Fee and Marie's faces. Confetti continued to fall like snow, and the shouts of 'Sieg Zeon' continued to rumble. Fee was pushed by the crowd that wanted to head to the front, and her unsteady body appeared at the edge before disappearing from amongst the coats of the crowd.

Zinnerman resisted the urge to break ranks and get to them as he reached his neck out to look for them. He could vaguely see Marie crying from amidst the human wall, and the military flag she was holding was dropped onto the avenue, trampled by some unknown person—

Part 2[edit]

The noise of the emergency call easily broke through the membrane of his sleep. As his fingers automatically pressed on the panel button, Zinnerman let out a hoarse “What is it?” as he undid the fastener of his sleeping bag completely.

“We’ve caught sight of an allied unit’s identification signal. The guess is that it’s the guest you mentioned.”

“I’ll go over right away.”

Zinnerman did not look at Gilboa Sant on the monitor as he cut the ship’s communication. He rubbed his oily face, rose up from the sleeping bag and let his body float towards the door. He grabbed the leather jumper that was floating in the air and glanced at the mirror at the side of the door.

During these ten years, his hairline had receded back completely, and his face became loose and limp. The current image of this tired man in his fifties was of complete contrast with the old him as Zinnerman looked back at the back in doubt, wondering in his heart who in the world this person was.

The cheers of the people became a pipe dream, and a body that was like a remnant was looking at the mirror in this utterly cold captain’s room. Zinnerman heard the sounds of his dream dissipating, and estimated the time that passed ever since that day. *17 years—well, I’m already so old, and yet this is enough time for someone to change what’s happening in the world, is it not?* Zinnerman gave a bitter smile as he thought about how he could still live on to this time. This man’s country and family was broken, and he, who had nothing else to continue living for, may had viewed the revival of Zeon as a wish he was banking on, but he never believed anything deep within, and he never felt that he could get back anything like this. This man was glancing at the world where everything to him was erased, and was just living aimlessly.

No—even if it were a hundred years, there were some things that could not be erased. The faces of his wife and daughter Zinnerman saw in his dreams blew aside the bitter smile in his chest. Zinnerman heard of the end of the war in a detention barrack, and on that day, when he returned to his homeland that was called Principality of Zeon, when he saw that his homeland became a ‘public toilet’ of hungry soldiers who offered themselves to the Federation, Zinnerman decided that he would continue fighting until he died. The end point called victory never existed, and he continued to fight in order not to lose his

mind, in order to stuff the deep valley that was opened within his heart, the crack leading to an endless hell—he knew that he was already crazy psychologically, and he knew that he could not fill that crack no matter what he did.

“Sieg Zeon, huh…”

The aftereffects of the dream caused the utterly cold air to waver slightly before fading away. *To heck with your Sieg Zeon!* Zinnerman stamped on the floor and left the captain room that was a dreary sight to him.

Part 3[edit]

At this point, they were 150,000km away from the shoal space region of L1, and the light of the Earth shining through the bridge window looked as large as a basketball. That mobile suit left the disposable booster board it used and slowly closed in on the “Garencieres”.

As its name suggested, the board-shaped booster board with laser rocket engines installed on both left and right sides was abandoned behind, and the giant with a flat head on the back. It was the RMS-119 “Eye-Zack”. The machine that had its own sleeve features lit the balance burners, negating the inertia from the booster board as it gradually matched the relative velocity of the “Garencieres”. The hatch at the back of the ship was opened, and the sliding-type cargo hangar was opened for about 30 seconds. The “Eye-Zack” drew a direct trajectory as it interacted with the hangar, and the extended restraints of the supporting frame held the machine.

Once the hangar took the machine in, air immediately flowed into the mechanical deck. Zinnerman waited for the alert light ‘Air’ to change from red to green before entering the mechanical deck. Due the long and narrow triangular shaped ship frame of the “Garencieres”, there was a long and narrow hollow on the front and back side of the mechanical hangar—or rather, above and below. There were 3 “Geara Zulus” docked with their backs facing each other at the tail end of the ship, the base of the triangular prism. Normally, there would be a “Kshatriya” occupying the upper level deck at the front of the ship, but at this point, there was no sight of the larger than average machine. The one replacing the “Kshatriya” at that place was the grey-colored “Eye-Zack” that did not seem to have any place to stand properly as it took up three mobile suits’ worth of space.

“Is it the old-fashioned EWAC?”

“This is a machine of little significance that’s here just to make up the

numbers after we evacuated from “Palau”. They probably won’t feel any pity even if it were sent here.”

Flaste Schole, who was accompanying, said with a tone of disagreement. Zinnerman passed through the wide upper deck as he glanced aside at the “Eye-Zack” that had been used for a long time. The deck crew and the mechanics were already on it, and the normal suits with the logo mark Rivacona Cargo” on them were floating around the deck. They did prepare a set of book data for a cargo ship as disguise, like route certificates and cargo catalogs, but they could not guarantee that they could pass through the absolute defense line leading easily by sending data information to the patrol later. If a patrol ship met them on their way, the plan would be for this group of people to line up on the upper deck and give smiling faces at the mobile suits that would arrive on the ship for inspection.

Normally, they could sneak through about 8-9 times out of 10, but the recent commotion forced security measures to be tightened, and it would not be easy to slip by the Federation army with their tense eyes. Zinnerman landed on the deck on both feet, reached his hands at his neck and looked up at the giant body of the “Eye-Zack”. *What exactly is the ‘guest’ that approached us at this time planning?* Zinnerman was not given much time to think as the cockpit cover located at the machine’s abdomen was opened. Looking from afar, he could see a tall figure in the pilot suit appearing from behind the hatch.

That person pushed aside the mechanic that was intending to approach him and descended towards Zinnerman. His face could not be seen as it was covered by the helmet visor, but he remembered that demeanor that showed no openings. The man did not look away from Zinnerman at all as he stopped on the deck 3m about away before reaching for his helmet.

“I’m Gael Chan. I’ll be in your care for a while.”

The bald man took off his helmet as he showed a fearless look. There was no mistake about it; he was the follower who accompanied Cardeas Vist when Zinnerman met them on “Industrial 7”, and also the watchdog of the Vist Foundation. Both of them, who once pointed guns at each other, exchanged looks, and at this point, Zinnerman could still identify blazing antagonistic intent from the other party. He cautiously asked back, “I suppose I won’t have to introduce myself, do I?”

“Why would a confidante of the Vist Foundation like you be at such a place?’

The “Rewloola” only notified them about the guest’s name and history,

but did not tell them about why Gael visited them. Gael's sharp stare glanced at Flaste, who put his hand on the pistol on his waist, and then turned right back at Zinnerman "This has nothing to do with the Foundation" and said with an emotionless expression.

"On a side note, there is nothing about my arrival here that is related to anyone here. There is a debt I have to deal with some people on the "Nahel Argama". If I want to approach that place, I will have to borrow the power of the "Sleeves"."

The eyes that showed no signs of wavering looked like there were black burns on the white eyeballs. *This guy is the same as me—he's unable to release his emotions and lost all other choices in life.* Zinnerman felt his hardened chest shuddering as he asked, "So you're trying to take revenge for your master?", and Gael's eyes remained unmoved as he answered with silence.

"So you'll even use your enemies to achieve your goals…it's not a trendy thing to do this nowadays."

"Whatever you say. To me, Cardeas Vist isn't just someone I'm indebted to, its because he's my master. if that were the case, who would want to ride on this mobile suit that's filled with the stench of Zeon?"

Gael's words probably were not just directed at the "Eye-Zack" that was similar to the Principality's "Zack" exterior. *To this man who survived the One Year War as a Federation soldier, people like us may be descendants of the demon that forced half the human race to die to him.* Zinnerman used his hand to suppress the rising killing intent, and Flaste, who wanted to step forward unceremoniously, "You're not going to build friendships with us? Fine by us." relaxed his lips as he said.

"But since you're on this ship, you'll have to listen to me. Everything that happened in "Industrial 7" will not be mentioned until both of us achieve our aims. Is that fine with you?"

"I understand that it was an accident." Gael continued without breaking his stiff expression, "I'm intending to settle this debt with someone else, and besides, I haven't snapped your necks here, so please trust me."

As this person stood while not caring about the antagonistic intent around him, there was bleak and gloom on the back of this person who had no place to return to. *He might be a god of death that may bring disaster to this ship—but that's fine. If we're going to raise trouble*

against the largest army in history, why don't we call in a death god too? Zinnerman lowered his face that was letting out a chortle, and ordered a deck crew member nearby, "Bring him to the room. I'll listen to any words he wants to say later."

Gael let the crew member accompany him as he stepped on the floor and left the scene gradually. "What's with that bastard…" Flaste would not turn his heinous stare away from the back of the other party as he said this, but Zinnerman said, "Don't mind."

"Since he introduced himself to be from Anaheim, even Frontal can't just leave him alone. Besides, that man will be useful at a certain moment, since he's someone who understands the workings within Anaheim."

The Federation army intruded at the venue of the dealing, and Cardeas Vist died amidst the chaos. Now that they recalled it, it was not hard to imagine that it was a family dispute that happened over the "Laplace Box". There was definitely something going on between Cardeas, who wanted to break the deadlock in the world through the opening of the "Box", and someone else, who used his assassination to protect the Vist Foundation and gain the benefits—Zinnerman turned his back on Flaste, who finally understood as he frowned, and looked back at the "Eye-Zack" that was standing there.

"That machine is way too pitiful to be left here as a replacement for the "Kshatriya". We have to bring the "Kshatriya" and the princess back together soon…"

Our aim isn't just this after all. Zinnerman did not exchange looks with Flaste, who nodded his head silently, and nudged his stiff beard on his jaw. He suddenly felt an emotion that made it hard for him to breathe and stepped on the floor.

He rejected all human things he could get in order not to lose, but this body of his was trembling because he realized how important the people he lost were. The empty container deck overlapped the hole in his heart, and he could not move due to an overwhelming chill. *I'm a lost cause here,* Zinnerman mocked himself in his heart as he left the deck that did not have Marida's machine.

Part 4[edit]

The light that rose up from beside the feet was so bright that even the anti-glare filter could not negate it completely. The pink incandescence light continued to swirl in a vortex, and a halation appeared on the all-view monitor as the plasma surrounding the machine continued to let

out terrifying cracking sounds.

The speed of descent was more devastating than expected. The worry that the machine would burn up at any moment and the fear of being devoured by the heat wave struck her. Mineva Lao Zabi continued to be rattled by the shockwaves striking the cockpit as she stared at the monitor that was heating up as her tense body continued to be pressed down on the assistance seat. The incandescence light was formed by the thin air that was converted into plasma, and not the burning of the machine itself; however, the surface temperature was already past 1,500 degrees Celsius and rising. The frictional heat from the atmosphere and the aerodynamic heating caused by adiabatic compression caused the “Delta Plus” to be burned by the unavoidable heat as it descended into the atmosphere. As the name Waverider implied, the aerial fighting machine that was burned red as it rode on the plasma wave was gradually gliding down this large and thick atmosphere.

It was approximately 2 hours ago from the moment the machine broke through the absolute defense line and got detected by the patrolling Federation warships. The “Delta Plus”, which was deemed to be a ‘ghost’ that died off in battle, appeared, stopped, went through endless questioning that was repeated, and ended up choosing to shake off the pursuers and move forward. The machine made use the rebounding effect of the atmosphere to enter low orbit as it entered the atmosphere through the polar track covering the axis of the north and south poles. It was unknown whether the ‘family’ Riddhe mentioned about used its power as the intercepting satellites did not take action, but it did not matter to the “Delta Plus” that entered the atmosphere from the south pole.

One would know that this layer that surrounded the blue planet like soap bubbles was a scorching hot endless wilderness the moment they ended. Once they rushed into the atmosphere, they could only leave the machine’s controls to the electronic navigation system and wait for the moment they leave the burning hell. The “Delta Plus” frame that was pulled by gravity was heating up as it broke through the atmospheric wall at a speed of Mach 20. If one believed in the inertial navigation device capabilities to calculate the current location through speed, time and machine movement, the current height at this point would be 70km. it had been more than 10 minutes since they entered the atmosphere. They were entering safely at a more gradual angle to reduce the resistance, but did this really take that much time? The incandescence light became red hot light without warning, and the machine that went from the thermosphere into the mesosphere started

to be covered by heat as Mineva glanced at the face of the man sitting on the linear seat beside her.

Riddhe Marcenas, who was holding onto the control stick tightly, had his tense face covered by red hot light here. It was probably the first time that he entered the atmosphere in a unit alone without hoping for any data link from the mothership or ground control. Mineva recalled how she used to observe the burning atmosphere from the small window when she rode on a shuttle into the atmosphere in the past. She would also imagine herself riding on the shuttle as she glided through the atmosphere through the visuals obtained from the observation satellites that could still receive visual feed as she descended. *Leaving a white scratch in the transparent atmosphere and creating a shockwave trajectory that's 1/3 the circumference of the planet—that was really beautiful.* Mineva felt that she, who was born in space and could logically view planets and colonies equally, was instantly absorbed by the established Nature at that moment. *I wonder if this "Delta Plus" is carving out a similar trajectory?* She turned her neck that was originally frozen in fear and looked at the roof through the normal suit visor.

The machine that was protected by anti-heat functions was feeling the frictional heat from below, and the rear top side of the all-view monitor was not covered by the red hot light. The thin atmosphere that looked distorted by the shockwaves went from pitch black into thick indigo, and after that, the vacuum that turned navy blue swayed as the sharp starry light continued to flicker as they faded fast.

Space became sky—The moment Mineva inadvertently said that, the red hot light at her feet decreased drastically, and what replaced it was a strong light that shone in from the right side on her.

Riddhe pulled the control stick, and the activation sounds of the rear wings was mixed together with the tremors. The main wings endured the thick atmosphere, and the G-force that struck back leaped on the machine that decelerated out of a sudden. The "Delta Plus" moved through the stratosphere as it switched into manual mode. Mineva felt the force pushing her forward hard, but she continued to look at the source of the light that was shining into the cockpit.

The light of the sun was there. It was not an extremely hot celestial body that was seen in space, but a friendly light that was apt for a day. *It's the bright warm light that passes through the atmosphere and graces all living things below it…!*

The overly bright light caused Mineva to reach her hand out to block it as she turned her stare to the front. As the blue sky showed absolutely

no traces of clouds, the white patterns of the altostratus clouds could be seen floating at her feet. The sea should be further below at where the plains of light below the intertwining clouds floating around were. *Our estimated course is that we'll be above the Caribbean Sea, so is this the place?* Mineva inadvertently opened her helmet visor and stared at the sea that was dazzling as it reflected sunlight.

She could not see the waves rising and falling from the stratospheric height they were at, and the sea was like a transparent blue glass panel that covered the surface of the planet. The long and wide arc that marked the horizon was lying further down, and the two layers, the sky and seas showed the contours of the Earth. *What a color, what a magnificent expanse!* Mineva could not tell what sort of situation she was in as she faced the world that expanded in front of her on the all-view monitor. She felt the blood in her body moving to her buttocks, but she did not feel uneasy about it. She knew that her body cells were being active, reclaiming the sense of balance humans originally had. She understood and recognized real gravity, and her body was radiating heat because she was shuddering in delight rising from deep within.

The place where all life was born, and the place where all life returns to; this is—

"Welcome to Earth."

Riddhe said as he smiled slightly, the same scenery was being reflected off his brown eyes. The voice that was not heard for a long time was half negated by the roaring of the fusion core jet rocket engines, and the rumbling air flow covered the cockpit. Everything and anything was rich, noisy, and unlike space, where time stood still, everything here was bustling. Light, wind, sounds, everything was changing at the moment. She could not hear her own breathing as she got engrossed in the breath of the Earth, and stared at the horizon that was on the other end.

The Shock Cone surrounding the machine expanded gradually as it merged itself within the blue sky. The “Delta Plus” that had decelerated to Mach 2 slowed down further and let the worn out scorching hot machine descend to the troposphere. The North American continent did not care too much about the invaders that came barging in from space as it expanded in front of their eyes, basked in the gentle light of morning.

Part 5[edit]

The phone rang. The crisp and clear bell sound of the antique phone echoed off the tall living room ceiling, caused the decorations on the chandelier to tremble slightly, and landed on the Alanveil-styled hard wood floor.

A pair of thoroughly polished leather shoes walked past that floor silently. Douglas Dwiyon remained unhurried, elegant but quick as he crossed the living room in a gliding-like manner, just as how he instructed the servants strictly usually, as he went right at the corridor where the telephone table was. He used his fingertips to wipe away the dust lying on the Bergère chair, glanced aside at the Monet scenery painting, and walked towards the corridor. This butler clad in black clothes basked under the morning sunlight that shone in through the glass panel of the terrace as he crossed the middle-aged styled solemn-looking furniture. Dwiyon himself could be seen as one of the antiques too, and in fact, his overemphasis attitude and his old age had earned him the nickname of an Antique amongst the maids and the cooks, but he himself was not overly concerned by it.

Every family member had a phone in this room, but Dwiyon would be in charge of picking up this call that was made with the help of a namecard. No matter who that person was, he must not be complacent as he would be giving the first impression of this family. Dwiyon tidied his bow tie with his hands and cleared his voice, “Yes?” and let out let out an attentive yet sophisticated-sounding voice that was hard to catch up with into the phone.

The old butler had been serving this household for more than 30 years, and he had already mixed in the flair of the family into his voice, but it was still not that overwhelming to the other party. The sound that came from the phone was a commotion that was of a completely different dimension from this famed family that was based in Southern USA.

(Hello, this is the Cheyenne Anti-air Command branch of the Federation Air Force. I’m the Duty Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Dickson Meyer, and based on emergency protocols, I’m contacting with regards to relevant issues. May I know if Chairman Ronan Marcenas is here?”

The wall clock indicated 9am at this moment. DONG. DONG, and the bell chimed at this moment, resonating together with the voice on the phone. Dwiyon’s hand that was taking notes shuddered.

Part 6[edit]

The polished leather shoes let out hurried footstep sounds as they rushed up the stairs. Dwiyon did not finish his timekeeping as he arrived at the roundabout at the middle of the stairs, leaving behind the

maids who were shocked as they moved aside, climbed up the second level, and carried his forward momentum into the office within.

Dwiyon did not have time to even breath at the door like usual as he knocked on the wooden door. “Excuse me!” he did not wait for the reply as he opened the door. The office was linked to the study, and inside this office, the first secretary, who was facing the master of the household turned around with a doubtful look on his face.

“What is it, Dwiyon? Why are you panicking?”

The first secretary was the son-in-law of the master in this household. Normally, Dwiyon would not forget to greet him, but this was not the time to do this. he took out a handkerchief from his pocket to wipe his sweat, and spoke,

“Sir, the military gave us an emergency call saying that young master Riddhe…”

Dwiyon could not explain this earth-shattering situation with only a single line. The first secretary widened his mouth and blinked as he face this old butler, who swallowed the words he was about to continue with as his shoulders went up and down together with his panting. With his back facing the window, the owner of this house was sitting at the office table, his hands on the table tensing up as he looked back at Dwiyon’s face.

“What is it about Riddhe?”

Ronan Marcenas merely said this. The tea-colored eyes bore backlight as his face naturally overlapped with the master’s son who had not returned home for many years—Riddhe Marcenas. This time, Dwiyon really could not say anything.

Part 7[edit]

“A new mission…?”

After all that? Alberto swallowed the voice that was about rise out from his throat as he gave a doubtful look back at the monitor in front of him again. Martha Vist Carbine’s eyes suddenly narrowed (Any questions?) as her icy cold voice echoed through the second communication room of the “Nahel Argama”.

“No, it’s not that there’re any problems…but the “Nahel Argama” is rather worn out after some battles. I’m wondering if we can get some other squads here as well—”

(I just want them to investigate the space region coordinates indicated

by the Laplace Program's information. You will be heading through that place when you return to "Luna II" anyway, so there would not be much additional work for you, am I right?)

Martha said nonchalantly as she used her long fingers to pick up the fluff on her shoulders. Alberto looked like he was rendered silent by that finger as he went silent.

(We owe the Senate Council a favor for what happened at "Palau". The "Unicorn" can't be delivered to the Moon in that case, so we should at least let them help out in some ways. And according to the feedback from the technicians here, it seems that it's very difficult to remove the pilot's biological identification register.)

The "Unicorn" was reclaimed after maintenance, and they found data from the machine that seemed to indicate the coordinates of the "Box". It was just yesterday that Martha heard of how things developed in this communication room. Because of this, Martha's plan was to make use of the "Unicorn" when it was still useful, let the military investigate the coordinated space and keep all findings to themselves, so she most probably left some avenues out there. Of course, if she could find the "Box" there, she would have most likely planned a way for the Foundation to strike first.

In terms of political sense, this thinking was definitely valid since the Vist Foundation could not keep the "Unicorn Gundam" itself. The indicated coordinates was definitely on the return path to "Luna II", and when considering the uniqueness of the location, there was very little chance of Neo Zeon attacking them. This definitely was a mission the "Nahel Argama" could still do as it struggled to survive, but the premise was that this plan was to be viewed this way by outsiders. As someone directly involved in this, Alberto could not agree with this, and his stare landed on the floor of the dim communication room.

After nearly dying a few times, the crew was finally on the path back to the docks, so how much would they be looking forward to landing? The tough battle of "Palau" ended 2 days ago, and Alberto and the crew passed through moments of pain and exhilaration. It would be really cruel to push the mission to them and delay their arrival back at the docks…

(You look like you went through life and death with them and developed emotions with them.)

He looked away for several seconds, and Martha read his thoughts as she spoke up. Alberto felt his heart being grabbed as he looked at the face on the monitor.

(This isn't like you at all. You're probably tired. When you arrive back on Earth, rest well for a while.)

"Me, to Earth…?"

To Alberto, who was mentally prepared that he would be observed to investigate the situation, these were unexpected words. Martha curled her lips that were covered with lipstick to the side slightly and continued, "I got a launcher shuttle from the Foundation.)

(I want you to take that Cyber-Newtype to Augusta on North America.)

"Augusta? Don't tell me—"

(Right, it's that Augusta. The Newtype research facilities are already sealed off, but I heard that the facilities for *readjustments* are still there.)

Alberto felt a chill up his spine. The Augusta Research Institute was one of the largest Newtype research facilities together with the Murasame Research Lab. However, this Newtype Research was only in name, as they once worked together with the military to develop human weapons. He would be bringing the female pilot of the "Sleeves" to the human research plant which would dissect war orphans—

"What are you planning to do?"

(If the commotion continues like this, our options of dealing with the media will be extremely limited. The Senate Council seems like it wants to keep its distance from the Foundaiton, so we have to hurry up and reassemble the UC plan Cardeas wrecked to appease the army. We'll also use this chance to calm those guys trying to get the "Box", so we definitely must make good of this.)

"Complete the UC project…the second unit?"

Alberto could not make any other guesses. There was another RX-0 being moved to Earth, being experimented on under gravity conditions. They had to hurry up, complete it, and use this to show the military superiority of the Vist Foundation and Anaheim Electronics. The fact was that there was a collusion between the UC plan contractors and the inner government council trying to take back the "Box", so the proceeding of the plan would allow them to hold this collusion off. If they could control the situation well, they could probably return the "Box" back to its original owner.

(This UC plan views the reassembly of the space forces as a cover up to eradicate Zeon completely…it sounds like a fantasy the

conservatives' brains would think of at a moment of inspiration, but there is a high chance that it might be affected greatly due to the dissolvement of the Principality of Zeon. The Foundation and Anaheim must have the "Box" in order to weather this storm, and I can't stand someone opening the "Box" due to a man's romance like what Cardeas did.)

It was rare to see Martha show her emotions when she talked as she put her hand on her wavy hair. She obviously looked anxious, and Alberto cringed as he looked away from the monitor, but Martha was right to say this, and he said this to convince himself. *Cardeas is the culprit behind everything who plotted with the overload and reached his hand on a 100 year taboo. He left his real successor aside and left the "Box"s key to the kid he had from his mistress. There's no reason that this kind of person is to bear the Foundation's future, so I—*

(I wouldn't have to use this move if grandfather could simply tell me where the "Box" is. Well, we can be considered lucky to get a Cyber-Newtype. Make sure all preparations are done when transporting her.)

At that moment, Martha erased all her emotions as she put on the usual iron-mask face. Alberto could not digest anything as he looked up and answered, "Yes."

"But I don't know if the Captain and the rest will believe me or not…"

(Most of those were killed in action by that Cyber-Newtype's mobile suit, right? Just say that you considered the crew's feelings and that there are unspeakable things. Besides, the Senate Council will be sending them a message to.)

It's not that kind of problem, but that some people who can only carry out top down orders can't take back the "Unicorn". The feelings Alberto once hid showed themselves on the face again, and he turned his eyes towards the monitor again. (I'll meet up with you too.) Martha remained unmoved as her lips formed a smile.

"You're coming too…?"

(The Moon's gravity is good for beauty, but it's bad for the body and mind. I'll head over to the Caribbean once I'm done with work. The weather's fine now anyway.)

It was a radiant smile. It never changed at all, just like how it was when his childish eyes looked up at her many years ago—no, it was a 'woman's smile, one more beautiful than before over time. This woman understood everything, from the feelings of the "Nahel Argama" crew to the psychology required to talk to them at the right moments, and

she was manipulating others like chess pieces on a board. Even though she understood, she did not pull forcefully, but set a direction for people to follow, and this was an attribute of a leader…*is that so?* a sudden chill suddenly blew by Alberto's heart as he lowered his silent face.

Where do I intend to go after this? Do I have no way back? Alberto looked at the hand that could not shake off the feeling when he squeezed the trigger as he thought, (Oh yes.) Martha seemed to recall something she forgot as she called out.

(That man who used to be Cardeas' secretary, he's called Gael, right? It seems that he's missing.)

Alberto was prompted by the beating in his heart as he looked up.

(There are signs that he used some trade routes Anaheim has to interact with the "Sleeves". Perhaps he's trying to take revenge for his dead master.)

Martha's lips showed a smirk, and she looked like a demon that was looking down at the soul in her hand.

(It is true that the kind of master would determine the kind of subordinate…be careful. Both you and I are on a path of no return.)

Martha used these words to lay a curse. The soul was restrained in the hand, and Martha stared at Alberto while giving him a look not to be complacent. Alberto felt the detesting feeling that was budding in him collapse completely as he softly answered, "Yes…" and cut the communication link with "Von Braun" on the moon.

The satisfied look Martha gave as she narrowed her eyes disappeared, and the thicker darkness that filled the communication room surrounded him. Alberto felt a chill as he suspected that someone was hiding within. *Is it that man who bore Cardeas' grudge? Is he someone who intend to bare his fangs on my neck in this darkness—* Alberto left the console, unlocked the door and arrived on the corridor outside. He ignored the stares of his subordinates standing outside the door as he grabbed the lift grip leading to the bridge.

Alberto tidied his tie and took in the air filled with paint fumes into his cold lungs. He was slowly getting used to the air in the bridge, but it could not be helped. No one here would speak up for him, and no one would help him. The only place of solace he had was the clutches of the demon that was looking at the world from the Moon, the only moment where he could relax. Alberto became an associate of Anaheim Electronics everyone hated as he went to the bridge. The

darkness that followed him showed no signs of fading, and he felt the temperature rising up his body that was moving in zero gravity.

Part 8[edit]

The thick green machine looked like it was scrapped as it sat on the floor, unable to be stored on the hangars that were available, and to those who were already used to seeing the eyes of the Federation units, this scene caused pure surprise. The 4 moveable binders were hanging from the shoulders, and if any one of them was taken away, the volume would be equivalent to that of an ordinary mobile suit. The only term that could describe this humanoid-shaped machine that could move the binders on its own freely and display exceeding mobility would be 'Heavyweight'.

"The NZ-666 "Kshatriya". From the model number itself, we can determine that this is an original mobile suit created by Neo Zeon. They did install a Psycoframe around the cockpit, but it's an old model. They probably used the test materials provided from Anaheim during "Char's Counterattack"."

Aaron Terzieff put his hands on the twisted cockpit hatch as he looked inside the cockpit, saying this. He was someone related to the UC plan detained from "Industrial 7", and he was an important witness under ECOAS' management at this point, but there was no better choice than him to analyze the unknown Psycommu machine that was detained on the ship. Otto Mitas used his Captain's authority to borrow Aaron for the time being as he stood on the catwalk built at the side of the mechanic deck, staring at the "Kshatriya"—the 4-winged that belonged to the "Sleeves" and took down lots of ships and units—and observing it.

There was also the Romeo 010 "ReZEL" on this mechanic deck that could be considered a ship's factory, and the other crew members were exchanging its missing arm. In contrast , the "Kshatriya" did have its limbs intact, but the total damage was worse than the Romeo 010. The sub-arms that were hidden inside the binders were melted from the back, and the conducting fluids continued to leak out from several parts of the machine at this point. The front end of the sleeve that melted and solidified lost the right hand it should have. The armor that had many curves was dented severely because of the heat and the impact, reminiscent of a thoroughly abused human. *That "Gundam" did all that?* Otto swallowed as he recalled the white mobile suit that was undergoing repairs on the mobile suit deck and asked the person beside him, "You once said that only "Granada" on the Moon has Psycommu production facilities, right?" Aaron lifted his head that was

originally poking inside the cockpit hatch, and answered,

“Yes. The “Unicorn”s Psycoframe was also developed by the Anaheim factory on “Granada”. As it was announced that this technology was terminated, we did everything there considering the secrecy of the work.”

“Why was it suddenly stopped?”

“I heard that it was because it ventured into too many unknown territories. Besides, it is made by man, and the electronics system can be explained through system reasoning. However, let’s take for example the moment the “Unicorn” activates its NT-D system. It looks like the psycoframe revealed from under is glowing, right? Even we, the manufacturers, have no idea why it’s glowing either.”

The ECOAS member who was supervising Aaron from behind showed a surprised expression too. “You don’t know either?”

“The psycommu receives the psycowaves from the pilot and amplifies it—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, resonate. What we can be certain is that the psyco chips, each the size of a metal particle and molded into the frame, would react to it, but we just have no idea why it’s glowing. The glow pattern would also vary according to the person riding on it. Anyway, this seems like it’s a phenomenon that happens when the psycowaves overloads the system, but the electric voltage of the psycommu would not increase because of this, and we have no idea what’s the relationship between the psycowave level and the glow patterns. The key itself is still human thought waves, and this thing called consciousness itself can’t be analyzed through data alone.

“If that psyco chip is the size of a particle, won’t it glow when it reacts with the psycowaves and vibrate?”

“Stop joking here. If that were the case, we wouldn’t have used it on the movable frame at all. It’s nonsense to have a weapon that’s glowing and tells the enemy your location here.”

Aaron said with a rather angry tone, and Otto could only shut his mouth of an amateur.

“The overloaded electricity would cause the electric cords to become red, right? It seems that the theory behind it is the same, but it’s not just giving off heat. It looks like it’s giving off light, and its light properties can be recorded, but this light isn’t just emitted through electric output. I hate to say this as a technician, but this is an unknown light. And also, it can be become a source of physical energy…”

At that moment, Aaron's words stopped unnaturally as he looked away to an unspecified area. "Source of energy?" Otto, who glanced over to ask back, looked at the expression the supervising ECOAS member was giving, "Have you seen the "Unicorn"s battle records?" and rounded off.

"Yeah…"

"I didn't see it myself, but I can roughly guess how it went from the damage this thing suffered. It was probably an overwhelmingly one-sided battle, right? Even if the assistance of the NT-D, the power it showed was abnormal. This is far different from the specifications we originally envisioned. It's making us scared for no reason."

Aaron looked at the half-trashed "Kshatriya" and frowned at it in a psychotic manner. His expression erased any plans Otto had of trying to change the topic. It was really an abnormal battle. *What kind of expression will Aaron show if he learns that the pilot of the "Unicorn" is a student who's still a novice at this?* Otto could not give a wry smile at this even though he wanted to, and his lowered stare turned around because of another voice that called him from behind "Captain."

"There's contact from the infirmary. The prisoner's awake now."

Liam Borrinea grabbed onto the handrail to negate the inertia, let her feet land on the floor, and handed the clinical records to Otto. Otto looked back at the meaningful stare his vice-officer was giving, turned his back on Aaron, who continued to inspect the machine, and looked down at the clinical records.

"Leaving aside her external wounds, it seems that she's rather frail now. I don't think she's in a state to last through an interrogation."

"…What's with all the scalds and scars written on this?"

There were records of numerous scars and burns on the human diagnostics outline drawn on the clinical records. The attached photos graphically showed old scars on the thighs and the cleavage. It was impossible to imagine those as injuries incurred from riding a mobile suit. Liam looked aside, "Many perverts probably used her so some toy." and said with disgust.

"According to doctor Hassan, her female functions are already wrecked."

This really caused Otto to be silent. Liam did not look at Otto, who inadvertently looked up, as she glared at the floor with a furious expression.

“I heard that a Newtype squad full of clones was sent into battle at the end of the First Neo Zeon war. They should have been wiped out already—”

“So there was someone who survived, but ended up like this, huh…”

“Maybe she got picked up by some savage human trader. It’s said that when Cyber-Newtypes lose the people giving them instructions, they will become puppets with broken strings. Most likely, she didn’t even know anything when…”

Liam grabbed onto the handrail and swallowed the words she was about to say next. She showed the pain and unhappiness only a woman would understand, and her wide shoulders looked rather bewitching to Otto at this point. He did not know how old Marida Cruz, the pilot of this “Kshatriya” was at this point, but from her looks, it was impossible that she would be above 20. In that case, she would be around 10 when she took part in the First Neo Zeon war—it would be too serious to describe her as simply a war casualty, a term that could be thrown randomly. He closed the clinical records and sighed out from within.

“This technology has no responsibility over the outcome, but it’s like it was born to destroy humanity according to demands and interests. I really can’t deny that this is a vice of humanity. There’s no saving us here.”

Liam muttered, and Aaron could be seen investigating the “Kshatriya” right in front of her. The technician forgot about the terrifying words he said a minute ago that came out of nowhere, and only cared about tinkering with the toy he got. His engrossed expression caused Otto to sigh just when he thought he went out of breath. “Leave the questioning of the prisoner to the Senate Council”, he said as he returned the clinical records to Liam.

“We do want information on the “Sleeves”, but we won’t be able to think of anything in our tired states. Let’s just return back to the port at “Luna II” first.”

It had been 40 hours since they left the shoal space region in L1. On estimate, the “Nahel Argama” seemed like it was already halfway through the return path back to “Luna II” as it gradually approached the Earth’s geostationary orbit. At this point, the Neo Zeon fleet would have no reason to pursue them. “I understand.” Liam’s voice in her reply indicated that she felt a little better.

“No matter what, they can’t possibly ask us to detour off to another

place…”

Otto was half-joking, but suddenly noticed Liam’s face tensing up, and he turned over to where his eyes at where she was looking at.

Looking far away, he could tell that it was Alberto’s round pudgy body kicking off the handrail from the other side, floating over to this mechanic deck. His face was pale for some reason, and he looked timid when he met Otto and the rest in the eyes, but changed his expression as he made a mysterious smile.

“I hope not…”

I have a bad feeling about this. Otto and Liam could not help but hold onto the handrail in unison, bracing themselves for the God of Plague that was about to arrive.

Part 9[edit]

“…I don’t feel that there’s a need for that.”

“We can’t be certain here, right? She’s a Cyber-Newtype!”

It was unknown who was talking. Banagher opened his eyes and looked up at the fluorescent plate on the ceiling, the one with a metal net to prevent breaking inside the infirmary, just like the moment when he first woke up on the “Nahel Argama” for the first time—

“Besides, her muscles were enhanced too. Won’t she try to resist with all she has once the drugs wear off? We should restrain her before that happens.”

“Only those who were modified later on would be like that. She’s of the congenital genetic design type, so there’s no need to administer drugs that would suppress such reactions.

It was the voices of Ensign Mihiro Oiwakken and Doctor Hassan—and Banagher could tell who they were talking about. His mind that just awoke from sleep started working, and he continued to lie on the bed as he turned around. “But…!” Mihiro’s insecure voice rang in Banagher’s ears, through the accordion curtain that was draped down from the ceiling.

“She looks stable emotionally, and more importantly, her wounds aren’t healed. I can’t allow such a patient wear a straitjacket in this condition.”

“She’s a Cyber-Newtype from Neo Zeon! She might suddenly attack when you aren’t noticing, doctor—”

“Miss Marida definitely won’t do that.”

Before he realized it, Banagher spoke up. He supported his limp upper body as he pulled the curtain aside.

Hassan, who was seated in front of the treatment table, and Mihiro, who was standing beside him, both looked over at Banagher, “Banagher…!” Mihiro spoke up as she widened her eyes, and those eyes were immediately covered with a tint of malice. “He’s here too?” the sharp questioning voice caused an awkward mood to spread through the infirmary.

“He’s considered to be recovering from an illness. I gave him a drip to let him rest after treatment…how do you feel?”

Hassan’s voice had a intent to calm the atmosphere, but Banagher did not listen properly. He continued to stare at Mihiro’s stiff expression and muttered, “You want to make an injured person wear a straitjacket…” but Mihiro responded with a highly agitated voice, “This isn’t something you should be interrupting at all?”

“Why is this? Miss Marida is an officer here. Don’t you have a specific set of rules for dealing with prisoners?”

“The “Sleeves” are terrorists. No matter whether she’s an officer or not, she’s still a criminal.”

“But Miss Marida…”

“Were you brainwashed on “Palau” too? She’s the pilot of that 4-winged, and the culprit that destroyed your colony. Who knows how many of our comrades were killed by her—”

“Even if that’s true…! But there’s nothing to talk about when you keep stereotypes like this, right? This isn’t like you at all, Miss Mihiro.”

Mihiro turned aside her face as she was at a loss of words, and went silent, “…I’ll send a guard to stand by her. Tell me first if you want to move her from the infirmary. She told Hassan and hurriedly left the infirmary. “Understood.” Hassan answered lazily as he waited for her to disappear behind the door before looking over at Banagher . “Do forgive her here.” He said as he immediately turned his chair to the treatment table. Banagher’s mystified stare was right at his white back.

“Ensign Riddhe did not return. She does have her emotions after all.”

Ah. Banagher felt that the voice released from his chest was stuck in his throat, and he felt difficulty in breathing. *None of the crew on this ship, whether it was Mihiro or Hassan, knew the truth here—* the

uneasy feeling suddenly rose up in him as he reached for the bottle on the side-table. He took a warm sip of water, swallowed it together with his guilty thoughts, and used his hands to touch head that fell asleep from who knew when.

Marida was in the Intensive Care Unit, while the other patients were inside the sick bay, so he and Hassan were the only ones here. Banagher saw the CT scan installation on the wall, and did not understand as he felt a chill, saying in an inquiring manner, “Is this the scan you mentioned about before?” Hassan turned his head slightly, “Huh?”

“You checked whether I was a Cyber-Newtype too, didn’t you?”

“Looking at the facilities here, the results are clear.” Hassan’s words when he first woke up in this infirmary became a source of anxiety, and it continued to ring in Banagher’s ears. Hassan scratched his head in an awkward manner as he turned his head to the table and answered, “Well, I really felt like investigating when you suddenly came out of the “Gundam” like that.”

“Is Miss Marida really just like what she said? What is a Cyber-Newtype?”

“That’s a fantasy those crazy scientists have. They want to use artificial means to create Newtypes, but in fact, they only created human weapons for war.”

Banagher’s mind recalled the face of the blue-eyed girl on the glass window of the capsule. There was no clear sense of realism, and he tried to dig deeper into this other person’s memory that would fade off like an echo—his clenched fists trembled slightly, and he let out a voice, “How can they do such things?”

“What exactly are Newtypes?”

Hassan turned his table and looked at Banagher, “You do understand the theory behind it, right?” and spoke with a heavy voice. “Of course…” Banagher felt his momentum wear out somewhat as he answered.

“It’s mainly talking about how humans who come to space will evolve, about how the perception will become stronger, and that humans can talk to each other without misunderstandings.”

“That’s right. Using your body as example, the damage you sustained from the G-force this time has become less compared to the time when I checked on you before. Even with the protection of the pilot suit, this

kind of recovery speed is still shocking. Do you know what it means?"

"No…"

"Your body is starting to get used to the "Gundam". You only rode on it 2, 3 times however."

These were unexpected words. Banagher's mouth was wide open in shock, but Hassan left it aside as he continued, "Humans have an ability to adapt to its surroundings."

"The data showed that when the Plague started spreading through the Old Ages, the death rates declined just 50 years later. There was no need for the replacement of generations to take place, so this would probably be the results of the human body acquiring immunity under tough environments. In other words, Life would often find the most suitable way to live and adapt. Humans came to space, and expanded its understanding to make up for their knowledge of the vast space. Theoretically, this is possible, and I personally feel that this isn't impossible."

Hassan leaned on the back of his chair and said with an expression that looked like it had seen the space behind the wall. *The senses or understanding abilities will expand to make up for the recognition of the wide living space. If that's the case, it makes sense* Banagher felt thought, and hoped that it was the case. *Misunderstandings and differing views will disappear, and hearts that can connect to each other can embrace each other and understand each other well. If that moment was a connection between Newtypes—*

"…If all of humanity became like that, there probably won't be any wars anymore."

"That may be the case. Or the mass-killings may end up worse than now."

"Why?"

"Think about it. Everything you're thinking will reach the other parties. Those adults who treat lies as lubricants over things will definitely be running away in fear. Besides, there will be a new divide between Newtypes and Oldtypes."

"Divide…"

"Also, Newtypes are said to be born in shape. How can the Earth residents who have steady lives endure this after having sent the remaining population over to space? It's like the master role's reversed here."

“In that case, let’s just send everyone into space and make them evolve in one go.”

Banagher knew that he was saying childish things, but he still said it out. He could not express the feelings he had at that moment in words to Hassan and Mihiro. This anxiety caused his emotions to be twisted, and could possibly cause uneasiness in others. If the end result was that the war no one hoped for would occur, humanity would be a lost cause. As long as Newtypes definitely existed, they should try for a possibility where the whole of humanity could evolve even if many forceful means were required.

Hassan put the pen he was playing with in his hand onto the table, and silently continued, “In the past, a man once said this.”

“The reason why humans won’t stop fighting is because humans are stepping onto the entrance to evolution. If there were really a possibility to turn into Newtypes, we should let the scientists experiment on the Cyber-Newtypes. If we left human evolution to nature, humanity will kill itself off in the end.”

Banagher felt like he was told what his suggestion would bring, and the hot air within his stomach cool off as he lowered his head.

“He does have his own reasons for saying that, but…”

“I feel that the way he looks at things is too sad. That kind of possibility…”

Possibility—the god that is created within people’s hearts by believing. Banagher did not wish that it was something that could be obtained by ripping people’s heads or mindsets. This would only end up putting possibilities within a mold and suffocate as a result. “I feel the same”. Hassan said as he smiled.

“So even if it’s inconvenient, we should use this current power we have to try our best to understand each other. It’s not about fighting over which side is to succumb to another, but to find a point of compromise both sides can agree on. However…the road sure is tough.”

Hassan said with a sigh as he looked over at the door Mihiro walked out. Even someone of his age could not solve any conflict beside him. Banagher stared at the side of Hassan’s face, and though he felt that Hassan was someone who could have the same thoughts as him, he could not tell the truth about Riddhe and the rest. Banagher felt a dangerous feeling seep inside his bones as he looked down at the icy cold floor.

Part 10[edit]

The plaster that was stuck on the face hurt. The fragments of the broken helmet visor did not pierce the face, but it still left multiple scraps on the white skin. This was the result of the body being forced out from the linear seat and the normal suit and bouncing around inside the cockpit.

Also, there were signs of bleeding all over the body, and it was said that there were a few broken ribs. Banagher saw that the body that was covered by the blanket was not moving as he looked over at the person with her left hand under a drip in low gravity, noticed the injuries from the collisions, and looked behind.

Banagher heard the sound from the electrocardiogram and turned around. *As expected, I shouldn't be here. She may have recovered, but honestly, what do I intend to say? It's completely ridiculous that the person who caused her to be injured comes over to be concerned about her wounds. I don't even have the power to save her* — Banagher turned behind to look, saw the long eyebrows that were sealed up, and immediately looked down as he stood in front of the ICU door. "The roles have reversed." At that moment, the voice came from behind, and Banagher, who was about to reach for the door, had his hand frozen.

Marida Cruz was lying on the bed, and her blue eyes were staring at Banagher. "Miss Marida…" the voice that wanted to say this was stuck in the throat as he could only look back at her eyes.

Is she laughing at herself for being so injured and how she got captured…no, those are eyes that had already made their realizations, relaxed and serene. Banagher felt his chest tightening and his vision become wet as he approached her at the bed. The vital signs indicator awaited, and under it, Marida gave a light smile as she said, "Don't just look at me." as she turned her bloodshot eyes to the ceiling.

"…I have no idea why it ended up like that either."

These words naturally popped out, and Banagher's lips were trembling. Marida turned her neck slightly, and her chestnut-color hair that was tied in a knot on the right shoulder shook slightly.

"I felt like I wasn't myself at that time…no, it's like something that was suppressed was lit up, exploding all the time. I know the person in front of me is you, Miss Marida, but…"

"You were swallowed by the machine."

Marida said calmly as she interrupted the words that were to no avail. Banagher looked up and looked at her.

“It’s the result of the reverse flow in the Psycommu. You thought you were piloting it, but unknowingly, you we being controlled by it. The system forced you to do this.”

“The system…?”

“I felt a strong denying consciousness within. Most likely, it’s the capabilities that were hidden insidethat “Gundam”s system. That system will search out Newtypes and destroy them, even if it finds that they’re Cyber-Newtypes…”

At this point, Marida’s face winced suddenly, and the pain that she suppressed was seeping out through the gaps between her teeth. Banagher saw her raise her right arm slightly, and took the jug on the side table to her face. Marida took the bottle to her lips, took a small sip, and took a slight breath. She then spoke with a hoarse voice, “A machine can’t determine the difference between a real one and a created one.”

“But humans are different. Humans can sense after all.”

The pale fingers covered Banagher’s hand together with the bottle, and Marida’s gentle smile spread on her dry lips. *Just like this.* Banagher felt her blue eyes saying this to him as he put his other hand on Marida’s right hand. Banagher put his fingers on the cold and saddening fingertips and looked at the eyes that seemed that they would lose focus if he relaxed for just a moment. He was trying to keep an irreplaceable life here.

“Miss Marida, did you…?”

“I saw your inner heart.”

His heart pumped wildly for no reason, and the strength disappeared from his trembling hand. Marida pulled her right hand slightly, and her face that was not smiling anymore looked away from Banagher.

“Perhaps you’re the same kind as me.”

“…What does that mean?”

Marida turned her stare that only exchanged glances with him for an instant back to the ceiling and said, “If that’s not the case, I won’t have any position to say this.” Banagher could not accept the meaning of these words as what she wanted, and glanced down at the pair of blue eyes that were averting unnaturally.

“But…the “Gundam” stopped at the last moment. Your will caused the system to succumb. I think it’s the core inside your heart that allowed you to do that.”

“Core…?”

“As for us, we don’t have that.”

Marida continued silently as she let her clear eyes look up at the ceiling. “That’s why my sisters and I could become one with the machine. We’re not related to natural birth, just existences floating around randomly…”

The hands that were extended outside the blanket weakly suddenly tugged at it. This was the silence someone who saw her end had, and a hollow presence that seemed to pass through space came from within her body. “Miss Marida…” Banagher’s musing voice was trembling.

“Don’t mind me, Banagher. No matter what realities you have to face directly in the future, don’t lose yourself. You have to keep saying ‘even so’.”

Banagher felt like he was just given a slap on the face as he retreated slightly. Marida’s eyes gave a strong glow that allowed neither pity nor respect to approach her as she looked right at him.

“That’s your core…there’s another system sleeping inside that “Gundam”, and your core will become the power to awaken it. The one who left the “Laplace Box” to it…”

The voice and stare that came from deep within her said this, only to be interrupted by a painful moan. The vital signs alarm went off, and Marida got up and winced in pain. “Miss Marida…!” he tried to hold her hand as he called out, but was pushed onto the floor by her. The drip stand was knocked down, CLANG, and a noise echoed through the room loudly.

That’s enough. It felt like someone said this. *Don’t waver because of me*— Banagher did not have time to think of the words resonating in Marida’s expression as Hassan came rushing in from the infirmary next down. He held down Marida’s body that got up and roared at the door “GET THE CARDIOTONI! THE DIGOXIN WILL DO!”, and the nursing soldier frantically rushed in as he got ready to inject. Banagher retreated from the wall, and through Hassan’s back, he saw Marida’s limp limbs. As Hassan held her down, pulled aside the blanket and opened the pajamas, the nursing soldier’s needle approached the bare cleavage. “Her muscles are enhanced. Injecting the needle in normally won’t work. You have to raise it and stab it in.” Hassan said, and the pale nursing soldier nodded before raising the syringe over his head with both hands.

A tiny silver light could be seen reflected from the needle due to the headlamp. Banagher closed his eyes right before the needle was stabbed in, turned his face, closed his ears, and left the ICU just like that. *You can't do anything. You'll just hurt her.* Banagher was pressured by the surging voice within his heart, and despite tumbling a few times, he still managed to move from the infirmary to the corridor.

"Oi, what's with you?" Banagher pretended not to hear the pursuing guard's voice as he ran in the gravity block, the path becoming a gradual one. *What system, what core? I'm just standing right where I am. The fact that I tried to kill Marida before will never change. I was manipulated by the "Unicorn Gundam" system—what the heck is that? The "Laplace Box", Vist Foundation, dad's voice hidden inside my memories…I don't want to care about them anymore.*

I don't want to ride on the "Unicorn Gundam" again. This thought came out from countless words in his mind, and he stopped in his tracks. He put his hand on the wall, calmed his frantic breathing, and clenched the hand that once sucked up Cardeas' blood. *Aren't these all things that couldn't be helped? I could only do that at that time.* As Banagher suppressed the bitterness in his heart and answer the face in his memory, a certain familiar round object appeared from the ends of his sight.

That object which was the size of a basketball rolled on the low-gravity wall and circled around Banagher's legs. (You don't look well, Banagher.) Haro let out this synthesized voice, and Banagher looked around the corridor. *There's no reason why Haro would appear on its own,* and as expected, familiar faces appeared from behind the cross-junction, waving at him.

Come along with us. Takuya Irei looked around, and mouthed; Micott Bartsch could be seen fthere as well. Banagher did meet them a few times after arriving back from "Palau", but he never had the chance to talk with them properly. He too looked around his surroundings, and then turned his stare back at his friends' faces that felt abnormally far away. He kicked the floor to make up for this distance.

Takuya prompted Micott, who would not look at Banagher in the eyes, and went off to the lift. At this moment, a crew with a Nautical Branch emblem passed by the trio, but it seemed that he was already used to seeing civilians move around the ship. Banagher turned his back on the crew member who did not look back at him as he followed behind Takuya. In his arms, Haro flapped its ears, and this familiar voice caused Banagher to feel really happy.

Part 11[edit]

"…It's tough to see Ensign Mihiro so depressed like that, isn't it? She'll definitely recover if you just tell her that Mr Riddhe's still alive."

The extremely hard and large plastic window reflected Takuya's face as he sighed. The numerous lights of the stars scattered outside the window were blocked by the reflected light within the room, and the stars could not be seen clearly. Banagher recalled Mihiro's stiff face as she walked out of the infirmary, and muttered, "So that's the kind of relationship they have…" and his muttering face was reflected on the window as well, resulting in a depressed expression appearing in the eternal darkness of space.

There was no one in the observation room located on the boardside of the battleship. There were three windows on both sides of the room, 5m long and probably 3m wide, creating a wide space that was hard to imagine that it was inside a battleship. The security on Takuya and the rest inside the ship had become a lot more lenient, and Takuya used this time to understand the structure of the ship during these past few days. Before he called Banagher over, it seemed that he had other places to think of as well. Also, as Takuya grasped the positions of the surveillance cameras, he said that they had to look at the windows when talking, and not look back inside the room. If the cameras caught them, someone could tell what they were talking about by the movements of their lips.

Banagher heard all about how Takuya and Micott followed Riddhe's plan, endured a nerve-wrecking escape process and got here. However, he himself had nothing he could briefly tell them about as he could only stare listlessly at Haro floating in the zero gravity. Takuya used his foot to hook onto the handrail, remained in a floating position upside-down, and said, "I don't know why especially…"

"It seems that the people on this ship don't know that Audrey disappeared. Only the 3 of us know about this, so we have to be careful. Right Micott?"

"Yeah…" Micott said on the bench and answered. She met Banagher in the eyes, and immediately lowered her head again. Banagher frowned, and Takuya stood beside him, scratching his hair hard, *geez*, and showed an anxious expression.

"I'll get something to drink. Do you two want anything?"

Takuya kicked off the handrail and floated towards the automatic door located at the wall behind. "I'll go too, Banagher was about to kick the floor too, only to be pushed back by Takuya sternly, "No need." *Just stay where you are.* Takuya moved his hand that was placed on his

mouth and gave hand signals, telling Banagher to talk to Micott before moving out of the observation room.

What was that? Banagher grumbled and turned to Micott as he was at a loss of options. Micott sat on the bench facing the window, still unwilling to meet Banagher in the eyes. The daughter of a factory supervisor, studying at a private school, the active confident person who was too dazzling for the students at the Institute, was at this point a stark contrast as she looked utterly depressed.

Suddenly, Banagher recalled the soft feeling he felt resting on the back. It caused him to feel awkward, and he felt a suffocating tightness gnawing at his chest, making it hard for him to stay at this place. He rubbed his nose that was not itchy and looked outside. “It’s amazing that you guys managed to escape from a military ship.” He tried to fill this emptiness with his voice, only for her to answer, “You’re the amazing one, Banagher…”. He thought that her stare was meeting his of the reflected window panel, but she immediately lowered her head again and held onto her hands cupping her knees.

“…I’m sorry.”

“Eh?”

“I’m talking about Mineva…Audrey. If I didn’t tip off…”

Banagher had already half-forgotten about this, and his chest was stabbed by Micott’s lost expression as he turned to her, letting out a mumbling voice as he said, “That’s…”

“I’m the one who has to apologize here. I let you and Takuya get involved in this.”

“We’re the ones who wanted to follow along. You don’t have to apologize for that.”

“But…”

“Besides, I might be the one who egged you on.”

It was unknown if Micott felt a little better as she showed a smile on her lips. Banagher blinked in a puzzled manner.

“If you’re that concerned about her, go get her back…I did say that on the rooftop of the mansion, don’t you remember?”

Banagher started to recall the incident that happened a week ago as it felt as distant as a year ago, and felt his tense chest tightening somewhat. “Yeah…” As he muttered, his lips naturally smiled as he

turned his bitterly smiling face to the window. “I’m so stupid for saying such things.” Micott said as she stood up and leaned her body towards the window.

“But since you helped her out once, you have to bear responsibility and help her until the end. That girl’s feeling rather down inside despite making a strong look.”

Micott spoke in her usual tone as she finally turned her stare over at him. Despite sounding rather forced, these words of hers did have her flair. “I understand.” Banagher answered and looked at the space outside the window. He felt the concerns in his chest being undone, and the clear lights of the many stars caused his body to feel comfortable and relaxed.

“I wonder if they reached Earth safely.”

“Ensign Riddhe’s accompanying her, so it should be fine.”

He answered Micott, who asked this question softly, and stared at the darkness that was gathered at the window. They were about to enter the geostationary orbit, but Earth, which was located on the bowside, could not be seen. The moon could not be seen, and the lights of the space colonies could not be seen either as only the endless darkness permeated outside.

The distance from Earth to the Moon could not be measured in lightspeed, and even the term ‘wide’ would be considered too small. At this point, the living area for humanity was limited between Earth and the Moon, and even so, that would be very large. If they broke up both Earth and space, it would be difficult view both living environments as the same world, and there would be a divide. Humans were creatures who were originally supposed to be based on land, recognising their distances and spaces. It had been a mere 100 years since humanity started using space as a place to live in.

If people don’t become Newtypes, we won’t be able to make up for this divide. However, can humanity really evolve after only 100 years? Doctor Hassan said that a sudden mutation is possible. If I’m one such case, I can sense Audrey’s existence as she heads to Earth—

“You have an adult expression there.”

Micott, who glanced at Banagher secretly, said this in a muttering-like manner. Banagher did not understand her meaning completely as he looked back at her silently.

“You’re so open-minded now. It feels like it’s not the Banagher I know

anymore."

"Is that so…"

After being told this, Banagher realized that he did not know anything about this person called Riddhe, but unbelievably, he had no sense of insecurity. Through the impression he had when they passed by each other on the ship and when they had their backs facing each other—*it seems like he's someone I can get along with instinctively.* If Banagher could believe such a vague feeling, he would feel that he could leave Audrey to him. Basically, she, who had the taboo name of Mineva, was never suited to stay on a Federation army ship in the first place. If Riddhe had a way to break this deadlock, Banagher felt that that it would cause the situation to change.

If I want to believe in people, I have to be prepared. No matter whether I look like an adult now, I never had this thought 10 days ago. Is it because other people's thoughts resting within me have covered my thoughts? Banagher thought in vain, and with a sharp pain in his body, he recalled Marida's face. "Banagher…" Micott tapped him on the shoulder, and her voice caused him to recover.

She turned to the door. Takuya was there, holding 3 coffee tubes. There were two tall and husky people behind Takuya, giving stiff looks as they approached Banagher. Banagher met one of them in the eye, and his chest that was feeling relaxed a while ago tensed up again. He got mentally prepared and waited for him to talk.

"Banagher Links, we hope that you'll come along with us."

Commander Daguza Mackle said with a knife-sharp unmoving stare. "…What is it?" Banagher responded, but Daguza did not respond to this question as he floated his large body over to him.

Those eyes that looked more artificial than Marida's showed a cold glow right in front of Banagher's eyes. Banagher exerted strength on his body that was about to falter in face of the Daguza's pressure, and took his stare silently.

Part 12[edit]

At that moment, the bright afternoon sun on the South side was starting to darken. "That's the one." Ronan Marcenas was prompted by the voice of Vice-admiral Mauri as he looked at the Eastern sky through the window glass.

With their backs facing the messy clouds, three black shadows gradually appeared. They started to get bigger in front of their eyes,

showing their plane silhouettes as they started to descend onto the runway below.

Out of the trio, Ronan saw the two machines that were surrounding the centre one. *Those are Federation fighter jets called TIN COD 2, I believe.* As he thought about that, the machine in the middle suddenly slowed down, and Ronan could not help but put his face close to the window. He saw the machine that was slowing down disintegrate its parts at the next moment, and formed a silhouette that was completely different from before.

The steam that was released in an explosive manner became a thin layer that covered the machine that became a humanoid. *That's the "Delta Plus"—is that the mobile suit my own son 'deserted' in?* Ronan tidied his tie and stared at the smart-looking unit that had a thick grey color. Ronan was already used to seeing such 20m tall giants before the One Year Year, when the Principality of Zeon army launched the "Zakus" onto Earth, and though it did not make this man who was in his fifties speechless, the instant transformation of the plane into a humanoid was still amazing. The "Delta Plus" burst out the main thrusters on the back as the two TIN Cods IIs passed by from above. It did not descend onto the normal runway, but onto the landing spot for mobile suit training. The flames from jets supporting the large body caused the light to be refracted, and the glass of this command post more than 200m away rattled slightly.

A car ramp, fire trucks, and electric cars with armed guards were mobilized at that time as they rushed to the spot where the mobile suit landed. The "Delta Plus" landed splendidly onto the middle of the circle, the carbon lined spot that was burnt from the thruster flares. The deep rumbling reached the reception room where Ronan was, and the coffee laid out on the table rattled slightly. The humanoid machine put the beam rifle into the back rack before kneeling down. After that, it seemed to cease all actions.

So that boy can pilot such a thing. Ronan imagined his son's face on the rugged-looking machine, and felt a sense of pride and also a sense of abandonment. "What he does really troubles me." Ronan looked back the moment he saw that, and noticed Vice-Admiral Mauri, who had all sorts of medals lined on his chest, give a concentrated frown as he looked outside the window.

"He left the battlefield on his own and broke through the Earth defense line on his own…because of the commotion beforehand, the defense line is already prepared to strike back anytime. I really wonder what will happen if we were a step late in our response."

The Lieutenant Colonel, who was still waiting together just now, had left the room in order to supervise the retrieval. The attending officer who was acting as an aide went out with the commander too, so only Ronan and Vice-Admiral Mauri were left inside this reception room as they faced the runaway. “I understand. Thank you for your grace.” Ronan said with his back facing the other man. It had been 5 hours since Douglas came barging into the office this morning, having spent half a day contacting all related personnel and deployments to cancel all his scheduled appointments; and he could not bring himself to face the Vice-Admiral was giving a look that he did his best like this.

Even so, Mauri’s words were not an exaggeration. The Marcenas’ family name did reach within the army, but there was no reason that it would be so familiar that they would let anyone randomly pilot a suspicious machine and invade Earth like that as and when they wished. It was luck at work that Duty Officer of the Anti-Air forces made the call for confirmation, and it was luck at work when Ronan just so happened to be there, awaiting his slightly late breakfast. If the situation happened during a Parliamentary Session, the contact would definitely bounce around amongst the secretaries, and the “Delta Plus” would most likely be shot down without any confirmation of its identity.

If one had to mention it further, this Vice-Admiral Mauri would definitely be considered lucky too for being in North America at the right time. The “Delta Plus” was once detained in the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, and the reason why it was brought to this Atlanta Naval Air Station was mostly due to the power of Vice-Admiral Mauri, who used his authority as the highest ranked Aide. Mauri was getting ready to enter politics, and he had been spending half the year on Earth, working to expand his relations with people all over the world. In this sense, he would be the lucky one.

In the Senate Council of the Earth Federation, the largest council—the Migration Issues Committee had the initiative in deciding the Space Administration Plan. There were not many chances that he could make the Council Chairperson owe him a favour. I’ll hear out what happened later on.” Mauri, who spoke on, smartly emphasized his authority, and on the other hand, his face was showing surprise about this luck that befell on him.

“But is this really not what you ordered, Chief Senator?”

“Don’t joke around, whether it was the mail before this or this incident, they’re both shocking revelations to me. Of all bad things to get involved in, that incompetent son of mine actually got involved with the “Box”.”

Ronan immediately let out these words to observe the expression on Mauri's face that was tanned from golfing. Mauri immediately looked and vaguely met Ronan in the eyes through the reflection on the window before answering timidly, "Regarding that, the Senate Council would have mistakes too." Ronan noticed that expression which relaxed at that moment, determined that he was not suitable for politics, and looked outside the window.

"There aren't just one or two pets reared by the Vist Foundation and Anaheim within our circle. I suppose since it's not an actual battle, not all guns will be pointed out…I didn't know anything until I saw the mail sent to you, Chief Senator, about your son being a crew member of the "Nahel Argama"."

"It will be easy to deal with if the military can understand the importance of the "Box". They actually let the Foundation instigate them into letting the "Nahel Argama" attack "Palau" on its own… logically, it is possible to kill off the "Sleeves" if Londo Bell were fully mobilized."

"What you say may be reasonable, but we have no idea what exactly the "Box" contains. It's really hard to use more military force than that when we're not even certain of what it is…"

Mauri lost the smug expression he had before as he spoke with the look of a public official, a general. *This man is lucky,* Ronan thought. *It's better for him to view this urban legend of how the existence of this "Box" can topple the world as something with very questionable validity here.* Ronan reached his hand to stroke his chin that dropped noticeably, tidied the tie that was loose, and argued back without looking, "It seems the "Sleeves" have abandoned "Palau"."

"Have the Senate Council understood the meaning behind this?"

"Of course. Since Neo Zeon gave up on their base, it seems like they'll launch an all-out attack while destroying everything. We should thus strengthen our defences—"

"Nope. Full Frontal is a very shrewd man. He won't give up a base easily if he estimates that he won't be able to match the Federation in strength."

"No way. But Neo Zeon's current fighting strength is less…"

"There's still the "Box"."

Ronan concluded and looked right at Mauri. Mauri gulped and gave a doubting look to the other man.

“The mobile suit in this UC plan has the key to opening the “Box”…I did hear that the “Nahel Argama” reclaimed it, but there’s definitely a transmitter installed by the “Sleeves” there. Don’t take random action on that mobile suit; it’ll be better if we can hurry up and send it to “Luna II” fast.”

“Yes, but…”

“The Federation took the initiative, right?” Ronan pursued on while staring at the mumbling Mauri. “The “Sleeves” will also give pursuit. If we let them make contact with the “Box” first…”

“I’ll send the message to headquarters.”

Mauri said quickly and hurriedly scampered out of the reception room. It was already late, but in a certain sense, he would still work hard, and would have the excuse that he did all he could. His instincts in regards to his job were not sharp, but people like him would show terrific reflexes to protect themselves. “That’s good.” Ronan muttered to himself and looked out of the window again. The “Delta Plus” lowered its head right in front of him, and was surrounded by numerous a large number of vehicles, giving off red signal lights as they surrounded the scene furiously.

The car ramp was moved to the side of the giant, and the roof reached the cockpit cover at the abdomen. It seemed that the lights were still refracted due to the leftover heat from the machine, and for safety sake, the guards who were the size of beans raised their rifles and aimed it at the cockpit. The wireless communicator should have connected, but the “Delta Plus” showed no signs of opening. He probably understood that he has no right to grumble even if he was shot to death—no, he probably considered the safety of his passenger.

Ronan could not help but sigh. Most likely, his son was requested by his superior officer to send a mail for aid from the isolated “Nahel Argama”. After he helped carry out procedures to withdraw him, he escaped back onto the battleship, causing chaos, took a fighter unit on his own, went right back at Ronan, and even had a ridiculous passenger with him, the Princess of Zeon.

Even if they manage to block the media, the Dakar residents with sharp eagle-like eyes were not that that easy to deal with. In a few days, the developments would spread amongst the Senators, and it will affect the countermeasures the Congress would make regarding the “Laplace Box”. While he wanted to reveal the intentions of the plotters and deliberately keep himself away from this incident, he still ended up being involved at the core of this incident. *Is this the magic of*

the “Box”? Ronan mused, and his chest started to ache as he clasped the hands behind his back.

Riddhe, you came to the last place you should be at— Ronan felt his chest suffocating as he murmured, and he silently noticed the cockpit cover on the “Delta Plus” abdomen opening. He saw the pilot raise his hands and walk out from the cockpit. It had been 3 years, but he could tell from first glance that the person in the pilot suit was his own son as the son walked down the car ramp before removing his helmet in front of the guards. Ronan felt that his son was looking right at him, and his chest started to ache again.

Part 13[edit]

Riddhe walked down the car ramp as the guards surrounded him with stares of killing intent around him, and walked towards the military electric car. The atmosphere that blew right in his face was thick and hot, and this was the air of the hometown his skin was familiar. He supported Mineva, who had her back straight, but seemed to have difficulty walking onto the electric car, and they were about to be taken to the command post behind the “Delta Plus”.

The body that had forgotten about gravity became lazy and weak, and sweat filled the armpits of the pilot suit. It seemed that Mineva was in the same situation as her body that was wearing the heavy normal suit slumped into the seat of the car deeply. He heard that she once stopped by Earth for a moment, but to the Spacenoids who were born in space, the gravity on Earth was really a struggle to deal with. Due to the restrains of the structure, the centrifuge gravity in the space colonies would be less than 1G by a few digits on the decimals, but it was this slight difference that the bodies felt heavier even though theythought they got used to it.

To Riddhe, this was the first time he experienced real gravity in three years—but he could tell that his body was quickly getting used to it. the wind blew by the wind runway, and the air that had the smell of the surrounding fauna and dirt awoke his cells, gradually washing away the tightrope-like fatigue he had for the past two days. And there was the soothing humidity that covered his skin. The ground and sun of Southern USA created this damp air the space colonies would definitely be unable to recreate. *I’m back.* This thought suddenly rushed up Riddhe’s mind, and he looked up at the blue sky above his head. The sky that was not blocked by anything and was expanded out endlessly appeared in front of him. At the same time, the helmet on the attachment hanging at the back let out a click.

Riddhe reached his neck and turned behind. He met the guard sitting

behind in the eyes, and immediately looked away once he realized the source of the sound. The rifle that twitched slightly hit the helmet, and the guard kept his silent face looking in front. An air of awkwardness was blown by the wind, and the rubber tires' smell that wore down on the runway irritated Riddhe's nose.

Perhaps it was because Riddhe brazenly used the name of the Marcenas family that he and Mineva were able to make their way all the way here safely, but they still could not relax at this point. The guards were still pretending to be attentive at this point, but on one look, anyone could tell that they were wary of suspicious people. *What reaction will they show if they realized that the one sitting beside them was the descendant of the Zabi family? Well, better wait for the orders and act around it than to think about it mindlessly.* Riddhe answered himself, and he held back the urge to turn his head so casually as before. It was pointless to treat others as people on their side. This rigid organization, the army, would show no mercy after parting ways, and since he was already at odds with them, he would have to find a way to settle this. Riddhe felt the heaviness of this realization he just picked up, and silently stared at the command post he was gradually approaching.

It was a plain 4-storeyed building, and connected beside it was a control tower. At the hangar that was connected to the runway, there were mechanic soldiers wearing military uniforms, surrounding the opened machine, and the TIN Cod IIs that were parked were glowing because of the sunlight reflected off the windscreen. None of these scenes or the noises of the engines echoing around were unusual scenes in an Air Base. However, the command post right in front at this point showed an obviously abnormal presence, and it vaguely spread a tense atmosphere through the entire base.

Riddhe exchanged looks with that abnormal presence. The presence had his back facing the limousine parked on the runway, and his blond hair that was started to become thin swayed with the wind as he was looking over here with the anxious base commanders. Riddhe did predict that he would order for him to be moved to Atlanta, but he never expected the presence to welcome him personally. The electric car ferried Riddhe, whose body went stiff inadvertently, and stopped in front of the command post. Riddhe followed the guard who quickly got off, and stepped on the earth he had not stepped on for 3 years.

He controlled his feet that felt like they were about to sink into the ground, and stared at the Vice-Admiral amidst the row of uniforms. He closed his heels together, and the Vice-admiral gave a silent expression as he saluted back. The base commanders too gave empty

salutes, not hiding their expressions that showed that they got into trouble as they looked behind Riddhe. Riddhe reached his hand out to stop Mineva from getting off the car, partly intending to block these stares.

The abnormal presence—Ronan Marcenas silently watched Riddhe's expression. He had already taken a step back from the line of officers, but the fact remained undoubted that he was at the center of a heavy atmosphere. "It's been a while." Riddhe walked right at him and as he spoke with a tone like he was talking to his superior. Ronan looked somewhat doubtful as he looked away and stared right behind Riddhe, "Is she the one?" Mineva walked to Riddhe stealthily before he could even nod, and said,

"I'm Mineva Lao Zabi. I'm able to land because of your son's goodwill."

The emerald eyes stared right at Ronan without fear, and the surrounding officers too looked like they were overwhelmed by this pressure as they checked themselves again. Riddhe felt a little delight as he saw the Vice-admiral and company close their heels together, and stared at Mineva's face that was shining under the sunlight. "I'm Ronan Marcenas." Ronan might had recognized this person as the real one as he reached his right hand out, showing a dull glint in his eyes.

“You must be tired after such a long journey, I suppose? Once the disease prevention checks are done, I’ll immediately invite you to my house. Please proceed here.”

After shaking hands, Ronan looked over at the Vice-Admiral, who looked at the base commanders, who in turn looked at their aides, and stares continued to pass down until the leader of the guards’ squadron. With the leader’s prompting, Mineva started to head towards the command post. Riddhe exchanged looks with her, suppressed his urge to accompany her, and faced Ronan.

I’m not guilty of anything, and I haven’t done anything that stained the family’s name. I’m just fulfilling my duty and responsibility as someone involved—Riddhe repeated the thoughts he had for the past two days as he looked over at the same-colored eyes as his. Riddhe ignored the Vice-Admiral and company, who seemed to detect that this was an awkward mood as they returned back to the command post, and said, “I won’t try to find excuses.”

“No matter what happened, I never intended to ask the family for help.

But just this once…”

“You’re just saying excuses all the time. Say anything you want to say later. Hurry up and change your clothes.”

Ronan left behind this voice Riddhe was used to hearing and turned around. Ronan was strict and by the book, and would remained unmoved even when facing his relatives. He would always tell people to explain the conclusions and the responses, and would separate himself from any personal reasons that were involved in the process without mercy. Riddhe faced the back of this father of this, and had some form of sadness melted within him. “Yes!” Riddhe saluted this annoying figure before Ronan could stop and turn his head, and turned away.

What exactly am I hoping for? I still have to argue against this troublesome person after this and ensure Mineva’s safety. Riddhe could not help but feel incensed as he felt like he was betrayed and developed such doubts. He walked towards the entrance of the command post, and the sharp stares on his back immediately disappeared as the sound of the limousine door closed right behind him. At this moment, the “Delta Plus”, which knelt motionless at the runway, looked helpless as it remained alone under the damp atmosphere.

Part 14[edit]

“You’re saying Her Highness Mineva arrived on Earth?”

Angelo Sauper could not help but parrot as he turned his stare onto the paper that recorded the emergency report. “This is a telegram from the Republic”. The attending official from the intelligence department answered as such.

“There was a Federation unit that passed through the Earth defense line with the authority of a Senator. It’s likely that Her Highness was on it at that time.”

“It wasn’t a misdirection? They wanted to move her secretly, but deliberately caused this large commotion…”

If the information came from the Zeon Republic, the source of this transmission should be a Neo Zeon supporter hidden amongst the Federation Senate Council or a lobbyist from the military industry who hoped for ‘tension amidst peace’. It was reliable information, but one would get the feeling that they arranged it deliberately while trying to overblow things. *What do they intend to do by choosing to send out this message that has so many holes in it?* Angelo stared at the

emergency telegram that merely recorded this message as he floated around the bridge of the “Rewloola”. “Why would it?” He turned around on hearing this voice.

“This isn’t fake information released just to lure us out. The Federation does have its privacy as well.”

The tall and large body clad in crimson red uniform said this as he stepped off the floating and sat onto the commander seat that oversaw the bridge, saying, “Captain, where’s the “Nahel Argama” at now?” Captain Hill, who was seated on the Captain’s seat beside him, immediately reached his hand onto the control panel on the armrest the moment he heard that.

“Soon, they’ll enter the satellite geostationary orbit. It’s strange to take this path if they want to head to “Luna II”. They’ll end up moving into the Earth geostationary orbit if they keep this up.

The predicted trajectory of the “Mock Trojan Horse”—“Nahel Argama” was drawn on the navigation monitor located on the hologram screen, and the locations of the “Garencieres”, pursuing it from behind, and the “Rewloola”, hidden amongst the shoal space region, were shown at this point. It had been 2 days since they abandoned “Palau”, and the “Garencieres” had invaded the absolute defense line of Earth as it tried to track down the “Mock Trojan Horse”. This indicated that the enemy was not headed to “Luna II”, but to the geostationary orbit revolving around Earth. “So they’re headed to the designated coordinates?” Frontal mused as the lips under the mask showed a smirk. He then turned towards Angelo, who was still holding onto the emergency telegraph.

“Are you going to launch, Angelo?”

In response to the sudden topic that was raised, an electric jolt passed through Angelo’s body as he let out a reply, “Yes!” Angelo kicked the wall nearby, floated to the communication operator seat, chased away the person on duty and started operating on the control panel. The distance the enemy ship had, the ship’s fighting capabilities, equipment; all these data were summoned onto one monitor, and the simulation to determine whether they could carry out the plan began.

“If we have the SHACKLES boosters on, we’ll reach within 10 hours at this distance. However, the mobile suits will have to move on their own.”

It would take too many resources to direct the fleet scattered within the shoal space region to take action, and there would also be the risk that

they would end up fighting the Federation army on a full front scale. it would be simply enough to deem the “Mock Trojan Horse” as a target and let the mobile suit squadron attack it. The problem would be the transportation, but the journey there would be possible if they could install the large capacity SHACKLES propeller Tanks onto the Sub Flight System. Once the operation was over, the reclamation would be left to the “Garencieres”.

The simulation ended in less than 30 seconds, and Angelo concluded, “Alright, launch preparations complete!” He looked over his shoulder and said this to Frontal. *Our hearts are linked,* as this feeling definitely rose in his heart, “Captain!” Hill interrupted with a chiding tone.

“Since there’s a transmission from the “Garencieres”, we can see the visuals from the psyco marker here. I’m wondering if there’s a need for you to launch.”

“It’s not in my nature to standby. Also, we need an enemy to make the “Unicorn” activate its NT-D.”

The only one that can complete this mission is the “Sinanju” that is equipped with the Psycommu”. There was this meaning behind these words, and Frontal stepped off the commander seat as Hill watched him leave from behind with a half-forsaken look. “Because you’re the one in the position of supreme commander here…” Frontal did not mind this musing and let out a voice that echoed through the bridge.

“If Her Highness Mineva is not on the ship, it doesn’t matter if we sink the “Mock Trojan Horse”. Once we unlock the seal to the Laplace Program, our side will reclaim the “Unicorn Gundam” again.”

This was the voice of his declaration. At that moment, Angelo’s mind immediately thought of the face of prisoner on the “Mock Trojan Horse”, Marida Cruz, but this was not enough to put a dampener to the excitement rising in his chest. “Yes!” He answered and closed his feet before anyone else could.

“We won’t miss this time. The coordinates indicated by that Program is the most appropriate place to unlock the Laplace seal.”

Frontal said as he stared at the coordinates data indicated on the navigation screen, and no one present disagreed. The coordinates indicated by the Laplace Program—200km away from earth, was in a low-orbit area that could not even be considered space, and it was a location a certain historical relic would pass by every day. There was still a portion of remnants of the Prime Minister’s residence “Laplace” that was crushed 100 year ago floating in low-orbit, become some sort

of tourist attraction.

The “Laplace Box” was said to be able to topple the Federation government, and the ghost of “Laplace” continued to float in absolute zero space. Angelo felt that it was stupid to try and link these two together as he thought that it was some bad joke, but gulped his saliva when he felt the chill developing in him. The “La+” coordinates indicated on the screen did not say anything as it let the blood-like crimson red sign continue to flicker.

Chapter 2[edit]

Part 1[edit]

Universal Century 0079, January 10th. On this day, the sky fell. A space colony fell onto Earth through the hands of the Principality of Zeon Army.

This time, the segment in this Operation British was named “Colony Drop” as they planned to compare the fate of the Earth Federation to the hegemonic countries in the old ages. This space colony that fell on Earth was the initial resolution since the declaration of war that occurred on the 3rd day of the same month. After merely 3 seconds since they declared war, the Principalities army, which had already gotten into position beforehand, attacked at the same time and immediately destroyed 3 sides. The Federation army panicked due to this sudden raid, and started gathering their forces quickly; the Principality coolly observed this in their rear sight as it started moving the space colony, its own “bomb”.

The colony that was built on Lagrange Point, located at a gravity balance between Earth and the Moon, and once the orbital speed decreased slightly, it would leave the original gravity equilibrium point. The Principality installed nuclear pulse engines on the Side 2 “Island Iffish”, which they chose as the bomb. After several hours of burst flares, the space colony ended up leaving its original orbit and started freefalling on its own.

The space colony that became a prisoner of gravity took more than 5 days to orbit half a round around the moon and fall onto Earth. Logically, the Federation exerted all its forces to prevent this situation, but they could not defeat the Principality of Zeon army that followed the colony. The Federation did not know of the existence of mobile suits at that time, nor did it know of the tactical usage of Minovsky Particles in combat, and its 3-to-1 superiority in numbers were of no use.

With the one-eyed “Zakus” accompanying, the large mass of the colony approached the atmosphere. It would not be difficult to make a 30km long metal cylinder 6km long break the through atmosphere together with the 3 large mirrors on it. The burning heat of the friction would cause the colony to be so hot that it would become a massive fireball, causing the atmosphere to take a hit it had never experienced before. The peeled outer wall would become a burning meteor shower, and the colony itself followed a black pressurized smokescreen that covered the sky, marking its trail of destruction.

The fortunate thing for the Federation army was that the colony was worn out somewhat due to the skirmishes that occurred for several days. The initial estimates were that the colony would hit the headquarters at Jaburo located in South America, but it split in the air soon after it entered the atmosphere above Africa. The colony broke into 3 blocks, one hit Australia, one hit the Pacific Ocean, and the last one hit North America. In terms of the results, Jaburo managed to avoid a calamity here, and the Federation managed to protect its headquarters that would end up leading the counterattack, but the tragedy of having a colony crash into Earth was not something that could be simply negated.

The colony became a massive bomb, and it was said that the power was around 200 times the power of a nuclear weapon that turned a city in Japan into a sea of fire—the atomic bomb that detonated in the city of Hiroshima. Amongst the 3 broken pieces, the largest piece landed in Australia, and it crashed into Sydney at the speed of 11km per second. The sight of the colony falling down as it covered the sky was taken with cameras from neighboring cities, and the people of the later generations learnt of that ‘sky is falling’ instant of horror. It crashed, causing an impact that caused Sydney to disappear immediately. This impact caused Sydney to disappear immediately, created a crater 10km thick, caused an unprecedentedly large 9.5 magnitude earthquake, and this was just the start. This large earthquake left an observed magnitude of 9.0, rocked the entire continent of Australia, and the magma movement in the orogeny caused the landscape on the eastern coast to change drastically. One-sixteenth of Australia was submerged in the sea, and another one-third of the land took a devastating hit. However, this was just part of the damage caused by the fall of the colony. Besides, right at the moment the colony fell, the Earth’s rotation was affected, and it revolved 0.1, 0.2 seconds faster every hour.

The North American continent did not end up in such a ground-changing situation like the continent of Australia, but one quarter of the

land was wrecked. The part that dropped into the Pacific Ocean triggered a large tsunami, and even the shores off the Indian Ocean suffered utter devastation. The colony pieces that fell through the atmosphere caused impacts that resonated with the tsunami, creating a large-scale storm that rocked the entire world for the first time, sending the residents on Earth into chaos. If there were an end of the world, this would be the scene.

The storm and tsunamis covered the lands on Earth for a week, and the abnormal weather did not subside for 6 years after that. The temperature in the colder Southern regions rose up because of this calamity, and not only did it cause sea level to rise, but also, the air pressure changes due to the sea currents caused desertification in humid regions. Disease outbreaks and riots caused by the refugees continued for several years after the war. There was a saying that almost 2 billion people died and were missing, but actually, they could not determine the actual numbers.

A week passed since the start of the war on the 3rd. The One Week Battle got Zeon's war for independence off to a rumbling start, and despite failing in their intent of bombing Jaburo itself, it allowed the Principalities army to continue the war for one year. After that, the largest fleet battle in human history, the battle of Loum occurred as the Principality launched a large-scale invasion to Earth. They used the Earth military headquarters located in New York City, North America, and gradually expanded its territory.

The smoke rose into the atmosphere, and descended onto the ground in the form of a meteor shower. The ones that landed on the Earth with authority were the giants with one eye, and it was not hard to imagine what sort of impression the residents on Earth had as a result. These demons that had different views and values were invading Earth—and the devastation they brought about was not something the people born on Earth could imagine. In that sense, the people on Earth viewed this army that was attacking their homeland as 'aliens'.

In terms of national power, the difference between the Principality of Zeon and the Federation was approximately a thousand times, and the options Zeon could choose were limited. The citizen policy was part of the Space Migration plan, the Spacenoids' plea for Self-governance was crushed by the Federation, and the people who were moved lived tough lives. These were facts, but despite the room for empathy, the fact would remain in history that Zeon was the most brutal killing organization.

After the war, the remnants of Zeon continued to carry out colony

drops. 3 years ago, the “5th Luna” that was used as a mining asteroid was dropped onto Lhasa in Tibet, destroying the capital of the Federation as they planned. The tragedy brought about by this atrocity was deeply etched within the people of Earth, and the Spacenoids’ views and stand were all blurred. At this point, as countless debris particles remained in space, the Earth’s sky that was showing the bloody-colored sun setting in the West—

The lush trees covered their heads from above, blocking off the clouds and sky floating above.

The trees that grew down the road had their branches reached out, and the density even caused the green leaves to grow onto the lane. The green corridor that was extended without an end in sight looked so dazzling, and Mineva put her face at the car window, observing the scenery outside. The ones with white and pink flowers were Dogwood, and were the vines growing off the mistletoe Kudzu? Despite the scars of the colony drop in the sky above, this place still had the vegetation exclusive to Southern USA. Due to the warm climate and the creek flowing down the gradual lowlands, the flowers obtained lots of humidity, and looked extremely lively under the sunlight.

It had been one and a half hours since the disease prevention checks were done at the Atlanta Naval Air Station, and Mineva was sitting on this limousine-type electric car. There were still vestiges of war everywhere, the streets of Atlanta still showed scenes of a metropolis, but these were scenes that were seen a long time ago. At this point, what was shown in front of Mineva was a snaking narrow lane within the forest. They passed through the lowlands surrounded by maize fields, and did not see any car moving in the opposite direction. The sparsely scattered farms and houses disappeared. Most likely, this might be the private land space the Marcenas’ owned. Mineva imagined the lush and thick green trees as a wal indicating a boundary, and glanced at Riddhe’s face as he sat right beside him.

Riddhe was looking in front silently, not looking at the greenery passing by outside the window. He was about as silent as the time when he piloted the “Delta Plus” into the atmosphere—no, he might be a lot more tense here. Sitting diagonally in front of him was Ronan, who had his mouth shut, not intending to look away from the notebook terminal. As for what they actually talked about on the limousine, there were only two lines, “Mom?” “She’s in a Nursing Home in Switzerland.” What was left was the heavy and unbearable silence passing between them.

This situation did not allow for anyone to talk easily, and Mineva

understood that Riddhe never wanted to face his ‘family’, but this situation she was facing caused her to feel that it would be easier if these two men were unrelated people. *What is with this weird depressed silence?* Once they entered society, they noticed each other’s flaws more than strangers did, and could only create a divide between each other. *Is the relationship between father and son like this?* To Mineva, who lost her parents before she was mature enough, this was something she could not understand, and she held her sigh as she looked outside the window. The green corridor faded in thickness, everything from the green pastures that grew on the other side of the oak trees onwards could be seen, and the large Tudor-styled mansion entered everyone’s sights.

The entrance, which was decorated with Corinth-styled ornaments, had a Greek temple-like style, and the main house, which had three-storey buildings connected to it on the side, looked rather similar to the Vist Foundation residence seen on the “Magallanica”. Both houses gave off the feel of age, radiating a sense of existence that was basically similar to Zeon’s vintage style, but one had to wonder what was with this cold air surrounding this house. This house did not look like it would waver as it remained rooted amidst this damp land, and it looked like it was giving silent threats without trying to hide or show off the special authority of those living in it, wanting outsiders to lower their heads. Mineva suddenly felt a chill up her body that was still not used to the 1G gravity, and grabbed her hands that were cupped in front of her chest under her blouse tightly.

There was no concern for Spacenoids, whether it was the house that was stubbornly protecting the old century traditions or the people with special authority living inside. There was no place for understanding each other—

“Do you know the story of “Gone with the Wind”?”

Riddhe suddenly spoke up, and Mineva nodded without thinking through properly. Mineva herself had not read that book, but she knew that it was one of the classic books during the Middle Ages, and was even rewritten as a movie. Riddhe looked outside the window and explained to Mineva, “This stretch is the stage for that story. Warm climate, fertile land, a very rich farm owner; this prosperity was supported by the black slaves captured and brought in from Africa.

Ronan lifted his face slightly from the notebook, and turned his eyes that were looking through the reading glasses over, but Riddhe’s face that was facing the window remained unmoved as he said with a self-mocking self, “What an irony, isn’t it?”

“The ones who started the space migration administration, the Chief Senator for the migration issue committee would actually live in Southern USA that relied on slaves.”

The prosperity and revival in this place was created through the resources squeezed out from the Spacenoids—this sarcastic line even children could understand caused the atmosphere in the limousine to become heavier, and Riddhe did not look at Ronan as he shut up. Ronan let out what seemed like a sigh from his nose, and turned his face back to the notebook. Mineva looked back and forth at these two men, and again felt that she had no refuge as she looked at the Western sky that was starting to become red.

The limousine passed through the gate located between the oak trees and drove right into the courtyard of the residence. At the same time, the sound of the rotor could be heard from above, and the helicopters flying in the air reached Mineva’s sights. There was no reason for them to return back to base, and the helicopters were waiting if there were any Neo Zeon strike teams around with the intent to snatch her back, so the likelihood was that they would be patrolling through the night. There were armed helicopters with gun turrets pointing out, and several guards lurking around—*All for the sake of receiving me, an anomaly.* Mineva felt a killing intent radiating out from the forest as looked up at the Marcenas’ residence that was right in front of her. The triangular roof at the entrance had a bird-ornament, and it took her a little while to realize that it was an authentic black condor.

Part 2[edit]

The quality of servants would determine what the family was made of. In this case, the fact that a servant would arrive at the carpark to invite them in proved that the Marcenas' stature was for real.

"Welcome back." Riddhe saw the old butler who greeted him, and answered, "It's been a while, Dwiyon.", and he, whose face had been tense ever since he reached Earth, finally relaxed somewhat at this moment. The butler called Dwiyon here merely lowered his head for a short while, and though it was hard to see his expression, even Mineva could sense a surge of emotions swelling from his trembling shoulders. It was common to see many servants who act tough with power backing them up, but there were not many servants who would weep earnestly for the family members they were serving. He was definitely feeling emotional, but he would not try to inquire about his master's private life on his own, could maintain some form of distance with the family he was serving while doing so obediently, and the magnetism working between them was one only a high-class family would have with a top-notch butler.

After passing through the arched entrance, there was a large empty hall that could be seen, and the sunlight that shone in diagonally from the second level window was reflected off the clean and polished floor. Like its outer appearance, the inside arrangement of the house and the width was not too different from the Vist's mansion. Mineva's official residence was basically no different from a palace despite being raised in a fortress full of defeated warriors, and this current situation did not intimidate her, but the aged pillared, walls, furniture and all sorts of things still produced an aura that would discourage anyone.

Unlike the old yet grimy looking Vist Foundation, everything in this place reeked of its own history, giving a suffocating feeling that was resisting change. Riddhe, who grew up in this family, most probably experienced this feeling. Mineva shook off this air that filled the space, and did not land her sights on anything as she merely followed the back profiles of those heading in. She turned to the hall located on the left side, past a table that could seat 10 people in the dining room, and arrived at the corridor leading to the inside of the house. It was an art gallery with paintings decorating the corridor, and with the varying light intensity lighting the paintings, the fine artworks could be mistaken for photos as they were lined up, awaiting visitors.

Mineva stared at the first portrait, and stopped. The person in this portrait seemed to be of mixed blood, and he had brown eyes that were half-passionate, half-rational. It was a man who looked like he

was in his sixties. Mineva did see this face several times in history class, but after looking at it closely again, she found that he resembled Riddhe somewhat, “This person is Ricardo Marcenas, the first Prime Minister of the Federation government.” Ronan explained, and Mineva continued to look up at that painting silently.

“The one over there would be the 3rd Prime Minister, Georges Marcenas, my great-grandfather. He would be called Ricardo Junior in movies or books based on historic themes.”

Ronan smiled slightly as he pointed at the paintings lined down the corridor with his eyes, introducing them one by one, “The first Prime Minister, Ricardo Marcenas, was unfortunately assassinated, but the Marcenas family continued to maintain important positions inside the government. The history within the Earth Federation government is also our family history. Our family’s fate is to become the pillars supporting the country…I suppose you can say that.”

There was no sense of conceit or deliberation in these words as his voice merely described the cold hard facts calmly. There was a chill

that arose suddenly in this dim corridor, and Mineva trembled as she saw these paintings that could not talk, understanding where the pressure in this house came from.

The ancestors of the Marcenas' family were lined up on this empty hall, depicting the history of the Federation. These were the people, the group of guardians for the Federation, becoming tense because of her intrusion as a foreigner. They were glaring at the forgotten remnant of the enemy, pressurizing her with a hatred-like surge—

"They managed to survive till now doing that kind of job."

Riddhe spoke. Mineva recovered and looked at him.

"The culprit that blew up the first Prime Minister's residence was said to be a separatist against the Federation's rule, but nobody knew the truth. Some people said that the mastermind behind this were the conservatives in the government, thinking that the liberal and idealistic Prime Minister will get in the way. This is the same reason why a certain American president in the Middle Ages was assassinated."

Riddhe looked up at the paintings, showing a look of disgust on the side of his face. As a descendant of this family and a son who deserted his family, he seemed to be exerting his presence in this corridor of time. He ignored Ronan, who went silent, and continued with a stiff voice,

"The terrorist attack that caused the explosion of the official residence…that "Laplace Incident" was a good excuse for the Federation to sweep the separatists. At that time, the call was basically, "remember the tragedy of Laplace. Never ever forgive those despicable terrorists". The pitiful separatists were immediately eliminated, and the Federation government quelled the conflicts on Earth. During that time, what did our Marcenas family do? We relied on the conservatives who killed the first Prime Minister, preventing our entire family from being wiped out. After the deputy Prime Minister became the second Prime Minister temporarily, Ricardo Junior won an overwhelming support from the people and was elected as the third Prime Minister, and thoroughly eliminated the terrorists, the ones who killed his father. These were all beautiful things that were made up, heroes that were made up. After that, the Marcenas family—…"

"JUST SHUT UP!"

The sharp roar echoed through this corridor of time, stopping Riddhe from continuing what he wanted to say. The paintings held their breaths, staring silently at their descendants. Ronan lowered his cold

stare on the silent Riddhe.

“So what you’re saying is that the world is run on conspiracies? You read too many nonsensical books. Politics is not that simple, and there are a lot of things you, who abandoned your family, don’t know about.”

Riddhe did not say anything as he turned his back on the other person, and his face was definitely looking like a stubborn child. *He’s trying to be like a spoilt child to his father, and got told off as a result; the current situation might seem to be like this.* “Miss Mineva” As she continued to ponder aimlessly, Ronan looked at her, and she seemed to panic somewhat as she looked back.

“We will be talking about the details later, but I still have to admire you for the courage you showed. I am willing to bet my personal honor and do all I can to make sure that you are not mistreated.”

The sincere yet sharp stare appeared in Ronan’s eyes, and this stare caused Mineva to feel a fluttering in her chest. “I am very glad to hear you say that.” She responded with a voice appropriate for the occasion and gave a polite smile.

“Let the unfortunate past pass by. I hope for a positive development through our talks, and for this, I will go all out in that.”

Mineva wanted to answer back with a smile at that moment, but Ronan suddenly lowered his face and looked away, “However, there is something I hope that you can understand first.” Mineva felt a chill.

“The Federation government is definitely not a sturdy rock that will not be destroyed. We, the people of the Marcenas family, have been protecting the Federation for generations and dedicating ourselves to it. It’s the same as you, the symbol of Zeon.”

But we couldn’t do it. Ronan’s words had such bitterness, and the emptiness that came as he drew the line caused his heart to turn cold. “Dad…” Riddhe let out a doubtful voice, but Ronan did not look at his face as he merely looked far away at the portraits lined up in the shadows.

“The Federation is still young, less than 150 years old, an immature nation. Someone…someone has to protect it.”

Part 3[edit]

During the war, the Zeon forces that occupied the land gave up on occupying the Marcenas’ residence, so one could tell how much historical value this office had. The office table was used since previous generations, of the same age as the custom made bookcase,

and they had been around for at least a century. The chandelier that dropped during the colony drop still remained hanging on the ceiling, glowing as they went all out to find similar parts of similar age.

The office and the linked study seemed like a mysterious space filled with the world's secrets to children—*is this room this big?* Riddhe looked around the room that was 7m wide, was shocked by the difference in the room from his previous memories, and recalled and yes, he was definitely unfamiliar with the office to such a degree. Making this conclusion, he gave a wry smile.

He entered the office a few times when he was young, and even sat on his father's lap, hearing stories about the greatness of their ancestors, but at some point, he did not want to approach his place. One of the reasons was that he grew old enough not to sit on other people's laps, and another was that his father, who inherited the land from Riddhe's grandfather, started to get busy as a High-ranking Senator as he rushed about. However, the biggest reason was that his father always took action according to his schedule, and excluded Riddhe and the family from his business.

He basically spends an entire year at Dakar's Senate Council, and whenever he returns home, he has to go all over the place, securing a group of people who will support him, process through petitions, attend parties for consecutive days or go on a trip for leisure. To this Senate Council member who invested in several funds and had to take care of several family enterprises, this family is just a guarantee for the world to judge him by. The reason why dad willing to receive Mineva and me is just… As he thought about that, Riddhe felt his mind start to agitate again, and he shook it lightly to remove these useless thoughts.

Calm down. Riddhe told himself as he suppressed this urge, sitting down on the sofa that was used to invite visitors in. He finally managed to make it all the way here, only to start butting at his father rudely, causing him to have a worse standing. Instead of letting the scandals about the family rise to the surface, his father would first act calmly and determine whether there was any political value—and this was planned right from the beginning. It was because Riddhe knew that he had such a personality that he planned this as insurance. He knew that he had no right to feel frustrated about the mood in this family, and that he did not have the right to criticize his father. At this point, even Riddhe himself had been relying on his family's tradition of trying to secure political relations to do this.

It was 4.30pm, and Mineva was resting in the guest room. His father, who told him to wait in this office, was probably talking with the army

and the Council, and they would most likely come up with countermeasures against this neutral agreement. At this point, he first had to secure Mineva's safety and talk about the plans the Senate Council plotted to do with the "Laplace Box". The Senate would most likely be activated as soon as possible, and complete measures would be taken to ensure the "Nahel Argama"s safety. Riddhe continued to reflect upon this as he pondered about how he should respond. At this moment, an abrupt knock on the door caused him to jerk his shoulders.

There was no reason for dad to knock on the door first. By the time Riddhe thought about this, "Please excuse me" Dwiyon had already opened the door. His thoroughly polished leather shoes moved on the carpet silently, and he put the coffee cup onto the reception table. Riddhe smelled the aroma of the coffee from the pot, and he looked up and this old butler who was a fatherly figure to him. "Thank you." Riddhe said, and Dwiyon lowered his head that had neatly combed white hair, giving a choking voice as he said, "It is really great that you're alright…"

"Really, you're sounding like an old man now."

"I am old now, I am completely old. Don't you know how much the master was so worried about you this time…"

"Dad?"

"Of course, since the son is a pilot in the army. Even I would worry whenever I hear any uproars on the news."

Dwiyon took off his glasses and used his handkerchief to quickly wipe the corners of his glasses. "You're exaggerating it there!" Despite saying that, Riddhe could not feel calm now that someone talked about these past three years he had not talked about, and sipped his coffee to avoid talking more about this. "Really?" Dwiyon's wrinkled face was reddening somewhat.

"Young master Riddhe, I'll just say this to you here. The master isn't in good health."

"…Heart issues?"

"Yeah. I think it's because he was reassigned to Dakar or something that he had not rested well for three years…young master Riddhe, I will not live for much longer, so can you please return to the house?"

These were words Riddhe did not expect. He used his hands to adjust the collar on his uniform and deliberately avoided Dwiyon's slightly hot

eyes.

“I know I’ve crossed the line with this kind of request, but this old me will like to request this from you. Please help the master—”

“So the son who went on the run is back?”

A completely different voice suddenly rang inside the room, causing Riddhe and Dwiyon to turn to the door at the same time. That woman with a nice clean cut of blond hair had her hand on the door that was pushed opened, giving a mischievous smile on her face.

“Sis…! You’re here too?”

“Of course. Unlike a certain person, I do treat this place as my home.”

Cynthia Marcenas answered with a tone that was that was hard to determine if there were any signs of cynicism as she walked into the office. She glanced at Dwiyon, who quickly backed away, and sat on the sofa, causing Riddhe, who stood up as well, to sit back. “Come here. Let me see your face.” She said as she used both hands to grab onto Riddhe’s head. This person who appeared in from of Riddhe, had a nice figure, a natural flair to brighten the mood just by showing up, and it was definitely Riddhe’s sister who was older than him by 6 years. “Oh? You seem a little bonier compared to before!” Cynthia said, and Riddhe answered, “You too, sis, you feel like a madam of the leisure class now.” Half of this was Riddhe honest opinion, and half of it was a reminiscent of the past as he looked away from the face in front of him.

Ever since young, Cynthia had been hailed as a talent of beauty and wits, and was recognized to be a flower in the social class, both internally and externally. On the other hand, she was the owner of a strict and advanced work ethic. Ever since she was a student, she started obtaining all sorts of licenses, and though the people around her kept saying that she was not someone who would stay inside the house quietly, this rich daughter defied all expectations after graduation and simply agreed to the arranged marriage her father made for her. To quote her, “I proved that I can do it, so I’m happy.” But naturally, it was not that easy to think that a woman would willingly give up so many options she could choose in her life and plunge into the world of kinship. It was unknown if the world of politics poisoned Cynthia’s mother as she kept spending her life in her own house or the nursing home for wrong reasons, and Cynthia herself felt repulsed that her mother could not fulfill the role of a wife and a mother. Having experienced a youthful period where she was flattered because of her name and her appearance, this big sister’s melancholy and rebellious

nature became even more rooted. However, though this was a result of the above mentioned descriptions, Cynthia was a woman who did not change as she kept her free and vibrant nature within.

The reason why Riddhe could leave the house was because his sister and brother-in-law took up a stronger sense of existence as supporting pillars. Cynthia was wearing a ladies' suit, had make-up on her face and the aroma of perfume on her. She had completely become a woman of the Marcenas' family, and to Riddhe, who ran away from home, it was unknown of his sister's existence was dazzling or lonely. Anyway, Riddhe really could not bring himself to face the other person. Cynthia stared at her brother's anxious face and said sharply, "Dwiyon begged for you to come back, right? Back home."

"You heard about it?"

"As I thought. Bullseye."

As Cynthia snickered, Dwiyon gave a terrified look behind her. *Does this mean that dad is feeling so weak that Cynthia can randomly guess what Dwiyon said?* Riddhe felt a chill entering his chest. "But Riddhe, can you consider?" Cynthia followed up, causing him to clench his hands that were resting on the knees.

"Speaking of succession, isn't brother-in-law Patrick learning? I heard that he's going to take part in a local election…"

"Yeah, I'm here to prepare for that too. I have to stand on the same side as hubby. However, even if Patrick was married in, he's still not a Marcenas."

Cynthia concluded, and one could imagine her father's impression overlapping with her existence. "It's unexpected that you would say that…" Riddhe stood up, and Cynthia shrugged, saying, "Once I got into the world of politics, I ended up like that even if I don't want to!"

"Dad won't say that because of his personality, but he really wished for this. If we let Patrick take over the family's tradition, there will be mixed blood in the terrain the Marcenas' family protected for more than a hundred years. To be honest, Patrick isn't the type to be a politician. If you're willing to come back…"

"I'M NOT MADE FOR IT EITHER!"

The atmosphere inside the house, the shadow of that unpleasant feeling will fall on me. Riddhe let out a loud and clear voice as he brought his face to Cynthia.

"If we can let new blood take over, the atmosphere in the house will

change. Don't you hate this gloomy presence too, sis…?"

Of course, Riddhe did not understand what Cynthia was trying to say. His brother-in-law was the second son of a very influential local entrepreneur, and at this point, he was married into the Marcenas' family, becoming the first secretary of her father. He had very little relation with the term 'ambition', and when talking about competition, this brother-in-law would be akin to taking part in a sports competition; no matter good or bad, he would always be a Mr. Nice Guy. Riddhe knew that his brother-in-law's harmless nature was suitable for marrying, but he understood that he was not suited to be a successor of a politician family, and that Riddhe himself ran away from home even after knowing this without warning. Such unexpected developments probably caused the stress on his father's heart to increase, but what could Riddhe do? Even his older sister, who used to be a very carefree person, was infected by this atmosphere, and naturally, she would start to talk about tradition and bloodline. Riddhe could not cope with this gloomy atmosphere at all.

Suddenly, Cynthia showed a grin and patted Riddhe on the head, saying, "You haven't changed at all~" but while Riddhe could hear the warmth of his relative, he could only feel pain in his heart, and he, who was unable to look at his sister, turned to look at the floor.

"May I ask who that girl is?"

"Eh?"

"I'm talking about the girl you brought back. She's cute, isn't she? Who is she?"

This second unexpected occurrence caused his heart to beat hard. Neither Cynthia nor Dwiyon knew of the reason why Riddhe returned home this time, and they did not notice what the many stares surrounding the house and the sounds of the helicopters rotors spinning from afar meant. "Ah, she's…Audrey Burne!" Riddhe immediately answered.

"She's the daughter of the largest stakeholder in Anaheim. I met her on the ship viewing ceremony…"

"Burne? I never heard of that name before."

Cynthia tilted her head that should have memorized the hundreds of investors' names as she frowned for just a moment, only to give a smile immediately afterwards. "Well, I'll look forward to investigating what relationship you two have later on. Will you be staying here tonight?"

“Yeah…”

“I’ll call in those ladies in for a dinner party. Do attend this party with Miss Audrey too.”

“I don’t have any clothing that can be worn for a party.”

“I will lend Miss Audrey something to wear. As for you, that uniform is okay. It will excite those free madams>”

Cynthia used her finger to poke at the mobile suit emblem on Riddhe’s chest, and turned to Dwiyon, “I’ll leave it to you then, Dwiyon.” who responded with a smile, “Alright, I will tell the cook to work harder than usual today.” and lowered his slightly grimacing face.

“If the lady was around, this family will finally gather at the dining table…”

Such saddening words caused Cynthia to reveal a bitter smile as well. *No matter how I try to resist, the many years I used to spend here with my family won’t change, right?* Riddhe’s sights first turned to the window where the sunlight shone in, and then listlessly looked over at the family photo hanging on the wall as a decoration. After that, a voice rang amongst the crowd, “It’s a bliss that she’s not here”, causing Riddhe to freeze up.

“If she knows of the commotion here, the illness that could be healed will never heal.”

That man walked through the door that was ajar, not looking at the other people as he went right to the office table. Riddhe felt his relaxed chest tighten at that moment and readjusted himself to face his father. Cynthia glanced back and forth between the two of them, and asked “What does this mean” as she got up from the sofa. Ronan however looked over her shoulder and stared at his own secretary.

“I’ll explain later…Patrick, I’ll leave it to you.”

Patrick, who was standing at the door, heard Ronan call for him as he answered “Yes” with a sullen expression. It seemed that someone explained what was going on to his brother-in-law Patrick, who in turn turned his head over to Riddhe, raised his hand slightly, showed an awkward smile which was the most he could do at this point, and then turned to Cynthia. “Then..” Cynthia seemed to realize the strangely tense tone in her husband’s prompting voice, and she gave a look back while leaving.

The grimness within the room increased. The sound of the telephone, the footsteps of the secretary, the murmurs from Dakar seeped into

this house, and the feeling continued to spread in waves that appeared vaguely. *It's because I hate this feeling that I can't stay in this house.* Riddhe realized this again, and accepted that he was the source of this tremor here as he continued to stare at his father silently. "Let us be alone for a while. Leave any urgent matters with Patrick." Ronan instructed Dwiyon and returned to the table. "I understand, Dwiyon answered and retreated from the room. The sound of the door being closed was left behind, and the two of them were inside the office, surrounded by this suffocating silence.

"I never thought I would face you in such a situation."

Ronan broke this silence and sighed as he spoke. Riddhe hid his shock that the initiative was taken, and answered, "I had been running away all this time." He clicked his tongue secretly when he realized that he accidentally butted back at his father. *Calm down, he's a Senate Council member who can deal with the army that will suck up to him. I have to put aside all personal feelings and tell him.* Riddhe felt the pressure in his heart as he muttered, and he turned his back at the window to face Ronan.

"Since I entered the army with the family's objection, I never intended to come back, but just once, I have to do this. You've heard of the terrorist attack on "Industrial 7", right? I was there too. That incident was not like what the news reported –"

"This is not what I want to talk about."

Ronan forcefully interrupted and stared right at Riddhe. His face showed neither anger nor disdain as he lowered his expression that would depress anyone at this point. "That is not all I want to talk about…" At that moment, Riddhe felt that the floor around him collapsed as his clenched fists were trembling.

"I was shocked when I received your mail. Indeed, you got involved with the "Box"…"

The term "Box" pierced through Riddhe's heart, and he felt that what he should be saying was dissolved. Ronan leaned back on the leather chair as he looked up, seemingly at the sky, and closed his eyes.

"Even though I tried to arrange for you to withdraw immediately, it ended up like this in the end…I guess this in fact is a curse, and that you are still a Marcenas."

Riddhe did not understand what his father was talking about, and he was not really certain of who exactly he was talking to. "Dad…" Riddhe muttered with a hoarse voice, and Ronan took a deep breath,

straightened his back from the back of the chair, saying,

“Riddhe, you need to know the truth.”

He stared right at Riddhe’s eyes, and said with a voice that did not allow for any words. His expression was covered by the shadows as his back faced the red sunset.

“For generations, this truth is only passed on to a direct son of the Marcenas family. Neither your uncles, aunts, Cynthia nor Patrick knew about this. I thought that I wouldn’t have to tell you this if you took a different path…but since things ended up like this, there is no other way for you to survive.”

Riddhe could not move his body. He wanted to treat these words as a joke, but he, who somewhat expected it, did not allow himself to do so. He realized that this was not just a political stench, and he definitely felt some sort of taboo existing. *Right, that’s why I ran away from home. The curse inflicted on the family is brewing gradually, and, inside this family that is giving off an ominous vibe, there’s some sort of—*

“Save us.”

Ronan muttered as he clasped his hands together, bringing them to his forehead. He was not saying this to God, and after leading off with these words that were not a sentence, he started to tell the true. That story depicted the confession of a man who lost a god that could have saved him right from the beginning—and the causality of how a family was destined to become god slayers.

Part 4[edit]

“I HATE IT!”

As the yell echoed through the room, the sound of the teacup and the saucer clashing with each other echoed throughout the captain’s room. While sitting opposite the stunned and blinking Otto, Commander Daguza said calmly, “I am not making a request to you here.”

“Our ship will reach the space coordinates indicated by the Laplace Program. If you activate the “Unicorn” there, there might be a possibility that a new Program will be unsealed. I will be riding with you, and I hope that you will pilot the “Unicorn” to the designated coordinates. This is an order.”

Daguza said without twitching his eyebrows, and beside him, Lieutenant Conroy too gave a stare that did not allow any arguments. It was several minutes since Banagher was taken away from Takuya

and Micott and brought to the captain's room. Banagher did not even have the luxury to taste the red tea the captain prided himself in before he made this request. They indicated that they had to look for the "Box" on their trip back, and Banagher had to pilot the "Unicorn" to assist with the investigations. Banagher looked over at the face of the captain who was pouring the red tea, and then turned to the ECOAS commander who gave a robotic expression, before arguing, "Why must I do such a thing?"

"Looking at the current situation, you're the only one who can pilot the "Unicorn"."

"If it's just about bringing back something, can't you just let another mobile suit do the job?"

"The system won't be able to identify if the main generator is not activated. The pilot has to be in it."

After sealing off one argument after another, Daguza asked back, "Any other questions?" as he gave a probing stare that seemed to read into the other person's thoughts. Banagher looked away as he answered, "You saw it too right? What that machine did on "Palau"…"

"Whenever I ride on it, I just feel weird. I don't believe that I can pilot it well, and I don't want to ride on it."

"But you came back safely. You managed to stop that 4-winged from resisting, capturing both the machine and the pilot. That was quite a lot of military gains." "MILITARY GAINS!? YOU CALL THAT MILITARY GAINS!?" *That silver needle of the syringe was glowing when it poked into Marida's numb skin.* Marida felt a pain from that instant as he inadvertently yelled, but Daguza, who was beside him, continued to remain calm as he gave Banagher an unwavering stare, asking properly, "What should I call it?"

"Asking me…anyway, I had enough. I'm not a soldier, so I don't have a duty to listen to your orders!"

"It's true that you do not have a duty, but you have a responsibility."

These unexpected words pierced through Banagher's heart, causing his body to sway for a while. After Banagher looked up, Otto and Conroy looked like they were blindsided as they stared at Daguza.

"You've interfered with battle 3 times already, and you're the pilot of what they call a powerful weapon, the "Unicorn". If some are to be saved by it, others will obviously perish. You have already interfered with many people's fates, so you have to bear this responsibility."

These were words Banagher had never thought of before. “What must I do…?” Banagher asked, and Daguza gave a straightforward look as he answered, “See things till the end.”

“And when is the end? Are you telling me to fight till death? Or are you going to get me to play this unreasonable treasure hunt?”

“That’s something for you to think about. Right now, you’re just thinking of running away from the trouble in front of you.”

Banagher felt a sharp pain in his chest, perhaps because deep inside him, he too felt that the other person was spot on in some way. This was not something he could admit simply, and he lowered his stare onto the red tea, asking softly without heart, “Mr Daguza…have you never doubted?”

“You’re always calm, not shaken at all…I really can’t be like tyou.”

Banagher did not intend to be sarcastic at the other person. By relying on a knife-sharp moral courage, he had to move even if he was forced to accept the coincidental outcome. Leaving aside whether Banagher wanted to become such a person, he felt that it would be easier for such a person to take action; that Daguza should simply be a pilot, and the “Unicorn Gundam” could display its capabilities to its maximum. *I’m not confident in anything, I can’t distinguish between ally and enemy, I have no right to wield a weapon.* He did not feel that he wanted to wield a weapon again—even if it meant disappointing Cardeas, his father.

Daguza raised his eyelids slightly as he showed signs of swallowing words. Banagher, who had expected a determined argument at this point, secretly glanced at his face amidst this unnatural silence. Conroy merely looked at his silent commander’s face, and then turned to look at Banagher, saying, “On the battlefield, doubting will lead to death.”

“That’s why we can only think of executing our missions. The leader has to carry out the responsibility he should bear. This would be the responsibility I am referring to.”

“But will people die because of it? What kind of responsibility is it that I have to start killing!? I can’t be like you in that I can simply sort out such things so clearly…”

Mission, duty, responsibility, both Federation and Neo Zeon had them, and both sides could explain it as justice. Banagher had nobody to rely on emotionally, but he felt that he would probably collapse due to fear if he merely remained silent, and such emotions caused him to roar out

what he wanted to say. “Do you think it’s that simple!” Conroy yelled out as he was about to get up, his hulking figure nearly knocking into the table. Before Otto could restrain him, Daguza held back Conroy “Everyone has their own way to take responsibility.” and argued back with a calm voice.

“Right now, your situation is easy to understand. The things you should be responsible for are right in front of you. I am talking about those classmates of yours.”

That moment of hesitation had disappeared completely as Daguza continued with a calm voice. Banagher felt blindsided by the discussion of this weakness as he eked out a voice to confirm, “Are you talking about Takuya and Micott…?”

“Even if they return back to “Luna II” their predicaments are rather delicate. How they will be dealt with will determine on our reports and testimonies. The only thing that will sway this will be your actions.”

“You’re going to use hostages again…?”

“You can interpret it however you want. You are in a position to change their fates, so it’s best that you understand this well and choose what to do next.”

Daguza finished what he wanted to say and got up, while Conroy followed him from behind. Their firm muscles could be seen fleshed out beneath their uniforms, and their back profiles turned to leave the Captain’s room. Banagher let out an accumulated sigh and clasped his hands together. “Well, don’t hate them there.” Otto, who reached for the teacup, concluded.

“They can only say that in their positions anyway. Also, Commander Daguza isn’t an emotionless robot like what you think, you know?”

He brought the red tea to his mouth and continued. Banagher lifted his head slightly to look at the other person’s face.

“When we were commanded to attack “Palau” with a single ship…to be honest, all I saw was darkness in front of him. But Commander Daguza did say that he viewed the operation as a hostage rescue.”

He did not understand what the other man was talking about. Otto smiled at the frowning Banagher and said, “You’re the hostage.”

“We owe you a favor…he said this before. If not for Commander Daguza’s inspiration and idea, we wouldn’t know what would have happened. I won’t tell you to thank you, but at least recognize him for what he did, will you? People have responsibilities they have to bear,

and Commander Daguza had been facing this seriously all the time."

Otto seemed to be saying this to himself as well as he put the teacup back onto the saucer. Banagher could not think of anything to answer at that moment as he lowered his head again.

"How can I not doubt? It's not like I made this detour because I like it, and I don't feel that the headquarters' orders are correct. But if I lump these thoughts together, this so-called responsibility will be another thing altogether…"

Part 5[edit]

"I got a funny telegram from headquarters. Shall I read it to you?"

Lieutenant Garrett said as he lifted his ace from the monitor, but as he met the people who arrived in the eyes, he immediately hid his smile. Daguza seemed to have revealed his expression on his face, and to hide the awkwardness of having his subordinate read his thoughts, "Please." he simply muttered and passed through the surveillance room door together with Conroy.

"…Yes. Sender, Space Marine Special Operations Headquarters. Receiver, commander of ECOAS 920 in active service on the "Nahel Argama". Adding on to message 1430. The chances of the enemy pursuing are very high, ample alertness is recommended. That's all."

Conroy inadvertently grinned, and Daguza could not help but curl his lips up as well. "Such a scary and useful advice." he remarked wryly, and Garrett finally showed a relieved expression.

"To think that they would remind us of something we already knew… what's their intention?"

"Someone must be trying to prevent us from carrying out our investigations. Some certain people must be thinking of bringing the "Nahel Argama" back and let the key to the "Box" fall under the army's management. But if we look at the Senate Council's side, there's no way they can completely ignore the Vist Foundation's order."

"So they sent this meaningless warning and tell us to decide based on the situation?"

"It's just a failsafe. Also, it's an indication that they tried to stop us."

Daguza did feel that it was too much for him to say such things, but Garrett, who shrugged his shoulders, did not seem to mind. Conroy looked at Daguza's expression and interjected, "A telegram's a telegram, so tell those guys from 729 as well!"

“As we planned, the operation will begin at 2300. Can both “Lotos” launch?”

“Yeah. We and the pilots from 729 have started to hear out the instructions for this operation. The Nahel Argama squad will launch 2 ReZELs. The machines are equipped with atmospheric-entry equipment just in case.”

“Alright, we don’t have much experience with carrying out operations in low orbit. Go listen to the strategy for this operation too so that the squads can coordinate well, Lieutenant.”

Eh? Daguza was surprised for a moment as he turned to look at Conroy, but Garrett had already answered “roger!” as he got up from his seat. *Sorry there.* Conroy gave this expression as Garrett slipped by him and walked out of the room that functioned as ECOAS’ command room. *Did Conroy detect my mood too?* Daguza felt somewhat awkward and yet thankful for the concern of his old friend as he sighed out a long breath he accumulated since the moment he was in the captain’s room. *What kind of responsibility is it that I have to start killing!?*—he recalled the expression and voice that pierced through his chest as he sat on the chair in front of the console.

“The government and the Foundation are duking it out for the “Box”… something definitely stinks here.”

Conroy pretended not to notice Daguza’s sigh as he poured the coffee and sighed. Daguza himself heard the voice from behind.

“I can understand how Cardeas Vist felt when he wanted to hand the Box to Neo Zeon. Seeing the politicians who only cared about their own well-being and luxury, surrounded by Foundation members who were fighting for their own benefits, he probably thought about giving everything away. The reason why he chose the “Sleeves” was simply because he wanted to obtain the results from elimination. Amongst everything in the world that’s trying to create havoc, only Neo Zeon has the discipline of an army and organizational ability—

“Conroy, do you still remember the operation at “Sweetwater”?”

Daguza interrupted the other person’s words and raised another topic. Conroy’s hand that was pouring coffee into the mug shuddered, and he remained silent for a while before squeezing out a deep voice, “How can I possibly forget?”

“I’ve been having nightmares of that even till now, you know. I kept dreaming of the corpses of the kids floating out of the hole in the colony…even though the colony never had a hole blown in it.”

Conroy went silent and continued moving his hand that froze. He tried to shake off the memories that immediately rose up in his mind, and there was an urge of anxiety, trying to look to the future coming out from his shoulders. Daguza, who saw the back of that normal suit during that operation from the driver seat of the “Loto”, had that image overlapped on the other man in the room at this point, and the sinister fragments of memories budded in his mind.

To counter the number of refugees that were drastically increasing during the war and after, the Federation set up “Sweetwater” in L2 space. It was a refugee colony hastily formed by connecting an open-type space colony and a closed-type space colony, both of different in structure and diameter. This hastily built refugee colony had bad living standards, and it could be said to be a slum in space. It would not take too long for this place to become a base for anti-government forces, and during “Char’s Counterattack”. “Sweetwater” became a working base for Neo Zeon. After the conflict ended, the defeated troops formed guerrilla squads, and “Sweetwater” became a breeding ground for terrorist planning, and it was a natural thing for such pus to be tucked away in “Sweetwater”.

The Side Nationalism (Controllism) erupted due to “Char’s Counterattack”, and the Federation naturally hoped that sweeping Neo Zeon would have immediate effects as they tried to seal off the voices calling for Elementalism. These factors caused the Central Intelligence Branch to be unnaturally enthusiastic as they investigated this terrorist activity and sent out ECOAS, which was formed not too long ago as a response. There was an empty building on a land behind a cleaning factory in a certain sector of “Sweetwater”, and the plotters of the terrorist organization were gathered there. ECOAS launched a raid and destroyed them in one shot. Those terrorists ignored human rights and laws, so their crimes that went beyond the law should be punished by means beyond the law—in order to pass this hidden message from the Federation government to the anti-government forces, they chose to use an extremist option of ‘eliminating’ the building together with the terrorists, so Daguza and the ECOAS 920 members rode on the “Loto” and got onto the outer wall of the colony.

They used beam burners to burn apart the outside wall and invaded the underground service roads in the ground block. They installed bombs on the common passage that should be located together with the building, and planned to use the steam that would explode from the water tank to destroy the ground, causing the building to collapse as well. The building in question was a desolate place that was planned to be taken down, located alone behind the newly built cleaning factory,

so there was no need to worry about whether anyone would approach there in the day. There were Intelligence Branch agents waiting at the space colony, ready to report everything that happened from their surveillance, ready to carry out any backup just in case. They just needed to wait for the masterminds of this terrorist organization to gather at the scene and let some electricity flow through the detonative device. Everything the “Hunters” set up was perfect, and the target terrorists started to gather at the building one after another, causing the ECOAS members to understand that the information they got was correct—except for one exception. A school bus was parked right in front of the abandoned building, and there were many children visiting the factory alighting in front of the entrance.

Once they checked that the last target entered the building, the events happened after the surveillance team withdrew. If the fact that the parking lot was full that day was a coincidence, the fact that the bus was directed to the targeted building was also a coincidence. If there was a need to press on for whom was responsible, it would be the Intelligence Branch’s fault for failing to report to the army that there would be a factory visit that day, but in the end, Daguza and his men who were hidden underground would have no reason to know these. The explosion caused the targeted facility, the building to collapse immediately, and they were then swallowed under the collapsed land. The target was crushed by several tons of concrete, and the school bus was buried under it as well.

Amongst the 37 children present, 30 of them died at that moment, and another 3 died after they were sent to hospital. The remaining 4 who survived miraculously lost some limbs, and suffered damage that could not be erased in their lifetime. One of them still never regained consciousness at this point even after 3 years, and even though that child was braindead, the parents could not give up on their flesh and bone that was still growing. It was said that they would visit the hospital to take care of their child every single day.

The investigation committee concluded that it was an unfortunate accident caused by a aerolite, and the media created a massive report on the tragedy that befell on the young children. In the end, only the management of the colony communal was to bear responsibility, and there were no reports about the men and women inside the building. But on the other hand, related rumors spread around the special forces of the Federation, and ECOAS was dubbed the “Manhunters” after this incident. The Federation sent a strong message with regards to terrorist activities, and gave them fear and hatred that they had never imagined.

They were a hunting force that specialized in killing; they were an organization that did all sorts of dirty work, from assassination and abduction to killing young children—after that, the members of ECOAS saw many missions that should not be spoken of, and were despised by the other soldiers in the army. None of their members could live their lives peacefully ever since then, “It was a tragedy.” Conroy mused, and Daguza inadvertently looked at his back.

“It was a mistake on the Intelligence Branch’s part. We couldn’t even do anything.”

“Yeah.”

“We were facing a group of people who would throw either colonies or meteors onto Earth. There might be more children killed if we didn’t take them all down in one go.”

“Yeah…we have to allow for a little sacrifice for the sake of many.”

Daguza forcefully clasped his hands together, and felt like he was biting onto sand as he said, “We’re cogs in this large installation called the Federation. Cogs don’t wish for anything. They just follow the decision of what the installation wants and carry out the order, until the day they break down due to a fault…”

Daguza suddenly recalled Nasri’s face, the commander of ECOAS 729 who led the raid on “Palau” and died with his squad. For the sake of that man and the subordinates who died in that battle, Daguza and his men had to quickly secure the “Box”, no matter how much sacrifice they had to make and how much debt they had to bear. Daguza told himself that he never doubted this, and he could not doubt before letting out an exhausted sigh. Conroy handed him a mug of hot coffee and said silently, “When we complete our mission, all guilt and sacrifices will be forgiven…you said so that time, commander.”

“I believe in those words.”

So please allow me to continue believing in these words. Conroy’s expression was saying this. Daguza brought the mug to his chest and he stared at his face being reflected off the pitch-black surface. Suddenly, he felt a bone-chilling uneasiness, and even felt himself trembling.

There was a face of a man there, who fooled his subordinates, himself, and even forgot that he was fooling others. Do I really want to drink this down? *Whenever my hand stops, the memories would appear, so I still want to continue drinking, so do I want to continue drinking this to escape from this nightmare that will never disappear until my death?—*

“Maybe I’m just trying to run away.”

The urge to slam the mug down was released through his mouth in the form of such words. Conroy’s eyelids cringed somewhat.

“Up till now, we’ve been swallowing reality into our stomachs. If we don’t swallow, we won’t be able to continue on…that guy’s different. He wouldn’t swallow, he continues to struggle.”

He was shaking, but he could still stare right at those eyes that were giving him a doubtful look. Daguza recalled the impression of those eyes in his mind as he said this. At the same time, Conroy seemed to have the mental impression of those same eyes as he softly uttered, “He’s still a kid.”

“He sealed himself in a shell because he doesn’t want to be hurt. That won’t save anyone.”

“That might be the case, but to me, I feel that he’s the one who’s facing reality.”

Daguza sensed that Conroy gasped as he looked back silent. He continued to look at the swaying surface of coffee.

“Justice will change according to the times. An existence like us is required to maintain order. Once we swallowed such a reality, we became reality. However…”

Let me ask honestly, what is this order we have to protect even if it means killing children? Nobody can clear or repay the guilt of ending lives that never began the anger the parents felt when they came to cut the nails of their children who will never wake up, because humans were not gods. Everything they did would never be rewarded, and no one will receive salvation. Despite understanding that, I still continue to kill myself off, telling myself consistently that it can’t be helped. Won’t I become a real cog gradually?

I swallowed reality and sold out myself bit by bit. In this sense, I’m a foolish creature who’s sealed in this shell called an adult. Daguza sighed as he looked at his heavy heart, lost in this depressive and silent time. Conroy closed his eyes and uttered, “I can’t say this can’t be helped” as he gradually tried to stir up something amidst this silence.

“There will always be room for the world to change, and there would be geniuses who would rejected reality and want to change the world. But there is a need for people to bear the time called present and carry on so that these geniuses can think for the future. The ones who have to

bear this will be us, uninteresting adults who unfortunately became one with reality."

Conroy smiled, perhaps laughing at himself for saying something that was not his style. If there were people who would bear this reality and support the world, there would be people who would resist reality and put their hopes on the future they could not see. *Simply put, it's a question of balance, is it?* Daguza understood at this point and felt somewhat relieved as he finally lifted his head with intent. "Sorry, I understand." He smiled as he answered, and Conroy shrugged while pretending not to hear anything.

I've already done a lot of things most commanders shouldn't be doing. If I continue this, nobody else will be saying such depressing things, but me. Daguza did not hope to be laughed at by Nasri as he looked away from Conroy and put his fist on his first to invigorate himself. "Also, there's a problem with what I said." this sudden voice shocked him.

"What I believe is not what you said, commander, but you yourself. Please take action according to your own thoughts. We'll follow you from behind."

Conroy put the mug of coffee he had not drank beside the pot and merely met Daguza in the eyes before walking out from the room. Daguza could not think of what to say as he looked down at the mug he was holding, and faced his reflection off the swaying fluid.

The ripples gradually eased up, and before the image was formed clearly, he immediately gulped the salted coffee that tasted saltier than usual.

Part 6[edit]

"A Foundation ship?"

The "Garencieres" bridge seemed more cramped than usual as the large hulking figure of Gael imposed itself, frowning slightly. Zinnerman grabbed onto the backrest of the Captain's seat, let himself turn to the other person while floating in the air, and answered, "Yeah."

"It appeared on the low orbit 20 minutes ago. It's not accelerating, but just exploring around. That "Klimt" is a ship you people used to move art pieces, right?"

Both Flaste and Gilboa were seated on the steering seat and the navigation seat, and in front of them, the "Kilmt" light marker was shown on the radar window. It was moving at a relatively slow speed of

8km per second, and was already about to move a quarter around the Earth. There would be ships moving to and fro every 30 minutes, but not many ships would remain in low orbit like that. The only ones who would do that would be the maintenance repair ships. Zinnerman did not look away from the silent Gael as he operated the console, and showed the other radar images onto the screen.

“Normally, I won’t really care about such things, but this is a different situation itself. If they have a plan to meet someone, this would be that someone.”

The navigation management satellite’s radar images, which any ship could receive, shrank on the screen, and the image that was enlarged was the enemy search image the “Garencieres” radar caught sight of. The marker of the “Nahel Argama” appeared, and Gael’s expression changed. “Hold on”, Zinnerman called out the hulking figure that turned slightly and let the magnetic tape on his soles stick onto the floor.

“Where do you intend to go?”

“I said that I’m acting on my own. It doesn’t matter to me what the Vist Foundation wants to do.”

“In that case, what’s causing you to panic?”

“I’m not panicking—”

At the moment he said those words, Gael suddenly went quiet. Zinnerman tapped the automatic pistol at Gael’s back and instructed him silently to raise his hands, emphasizing, “Sorry, we’re not pursuing the “Nahel Argama” for fun either.”

“Tell me what you know. It’ll be the end if you refuse.”

Zinnerman had no intent of threatening him in the first place. *This man never left the cabin he was assigned to for the past 10 hours or so when he was kept on the ship, and he never intended to say anything, so I guess it’s about time to force him to tell the truth. It’ll take us less than 2 hours to catch up to the “Mock Trojan Horse”—the “Nahel Argama” as it drifts past the geostationary orbit, and this “Garencieres” will enter low orbit. During this time, this man who used to be a confidante of the Vist Foundation is conspiring with a Foundation ship in front of us. If we can’t prove that both parties did not contact each other, we can’t let Gael remain on this ship.*

Gael raised both hands and slowly turned to Zinnerman, and he seemed to realize that Flaste, who was sitting on the steering seat, was reaching his hand into his clothes. He exhaled to relieve the killing

intent on his lower body, and opened his tightly sealed lips, saying, “that Foundation ship is most likely controlled by Martha Carbine.”

“Martha Carbine…you mean that woman who married from the Vist Foundation to the Anaheim Electronics’ chairman’s family?”

“That’s right, she’s Cardeas Vist’s own little sister, and right now, she’s the substitute leader of the Foundation. She’s the first person I should look for revenge.”

Gael’s straightforward voice pierced through Zinnerman’s chest, and made it difficult for him to breath. *So this is what the family scuffle for the “Laplace Box” was about—to prevent the “Box” from being released,* ***the younger sister killed her older brother****.”*

“…Is that Martha you’re looking for on that ship?”

“No, Martha herself is on the moon. The one on the “Nahel Argama” is the subordinate she raised. The “Klint” was probably chartered to take in those guys.”

Gael’s infuriated expression of killing intent dispelled all doubts in Zinnerman that it was a conceived lie. He kept his automatic pistol and confirmed, “So, that means that “Gundam” is on board as well?” The “Klimt” was a small ship, but it was still large enough to contain a mobile suit. “Not likely.” Gael quickly answered.

“The “Unicorn” is managed under the army. I don’t think even Martha can simply get a military resource so easily.”

“Even if it’s the woman who incited the army to break our deal with Cardeas we’re talking about here?”

“If we consider the objective of preventing the “Box” from being released, the Foundation and Federation government do have a common goal. However, the situation is different now. The existence of the “Box” is in doubt, and there are differences between both sides’ thoughts. The Foundation hopes to maintain thing as they are, while the government wants to cash in on the benefits.”

These words are easy to understand. The Federation felt that they could get rid of the “Box” that’s threatening the government through this chance, but the Vist Foundation didn’t want to let go of this benefit they had for 100 years. The ones who can get the “Box” first can decide who would get the benefits in the next generation, and in this sense, the “Box” is really a piece of authentic treasure. As Cardeas said, it has the power to change the future. Both sides are chasing after that thing with bloody eyes, one for the sake of political power,

and the other for the sake of economic power to manipulate the Federation army, so the "Nahel Argama" could only move back and forth according to the struggle of power between these two. Our Neo Zeon forces is just playing a sideshow to top it off here. "I see." Zinnerman stroked the beard on his chin.

"Now I understand why that brat launched on his own during that battle in the shoal space region. If they can destroy the "Gundam" that functions as a key, they'll be able to protect the secrets of the "Box". Martha herself planned it."

"That's right. However, that was only a secondary plan. If the "Unicorn" is destroyed, Martha will not be able to know where the "Box" is."

"What's going on? Flaste asked. Gael looked at him "The only ones who know where the "Box" is are the leader Syam Vist and every leader of the foundation."and answered his doubt while reciting like a poem.

"If Martha wants to give a clear signal as to who the real leader is, she must get the "Box"."

As everyone on the bridge went silent, "Of course, I don't know where the "Box" is." Gael quipped. *Let's just believe him. If he knows where the "Box" is, he would be able to threaten Martha more directly.* Zinnerman more or less understood what was going on as he looked up at Gael's face again.

"So it's Martha's instructions for the "Mock Trojan Horse" to move towards the space coordinates?"

"Most likely. She probably intends to obtain information on the "Box" before the "Unicorn" is moved to "Luna II". Now you understand why I'm panicking?"

Gael's expression that was looking back was giving off an anxious look. Zinnerman blinked his eyes as he saw this.

"That ship was deployed here to move Martha's subordinates and the investigation reports here back. If we just wait for the investigations to end leisurely, my chance to take revenge will slip off."

After saying that, Gael turned again. Before he was about to step off the floor, Zinnerman grabbed him by the shoulder, "What do you plan to do alone?" and called him.

"I'm going to get Martha's subordinate and force him to reveal everything she did to the world." Gael shook off the hand grabbing his shoulder and gave Zinnerman a sharp glare. "No matter whether this

will be shot down immediately, this impact will be enough to shoot down Martha from the position of the substitute Foundation leader. I want to end things here as I can't protect my master."

"How are you going to capture her subordinate? Are you going to use the "Eye-Zack" to fight the "Mock Trojan Horse"? It is damaged somewhat, but it is still a battleship in service."

"I have a plan."

Gael said without an expression on his face as he turned away from Zinnerman. "I told you to wait." Zinnerman emphasized as he let his body float to Gael, and then blocked the door.

"In that case, I'll tell you our situation. There's someone else we have to bring back from the "Mock Trojan Horse"."

"Mineva Zabi? If you want her, she's moved away already—"

"No, the one we want back is my subordinate. I want to save that person before our reinforcements meet up."

Zinnerman had already heard the news from the "Rewloola"s telegram that Mineva was brought to Earth. The ship also knew at that moment that Full Frontal, who was onboard the "Rewloola", was approaching. It was obvious what he was planning when he initiated a raid after hearing that Mineva was not on the "Mock Trojan Horse" broke out. Those eyes under the mask could not see the captive Marida. Zinnerman had to save her before the "Mock Trojan Horse" was sunk.

"…I'm listening."

Gael answered after several seconds of looking into the thoughts of the other person's expressions. For a moment, Zinnerman sensed that they were on the same page, and started to focus on the issue at hand as he stared right at Gael's still eyes, saying, "Before that, I'll like to confirm something."

"You said that there is a power amongst the Federation that will try to use this chance to steal the "Box". Who are they?"

Gael gave a look of surprise, and frowned, "They're a group of people fighting with the Foundation and intend to keep the army for their own use. If we use the logic that the enemy of our enemy is our friend, we might be able to make use of them." Zinnerman stared intently as he said, but the other person smirked. "It's impossible." This voice rang within Zinnerman's eardrums.

"Those people have a low opinion of you. Besides, they're the ones

who initiated the UC plan."

Gilboa turned his frightened face around as he interrupted, "The UC plan, you say? As in those guys who built the "Unicorn Gundam"…?" Zinnerman recalled that mobile suit that was built to destroy Zeon, the demonic face of that Newtype-destroying machine, and calmly asked, "So they're?" Gael looked at Earth that was shown on the window, and said,

"The Migration Issues Committee, the largest conservative force that determined the Federation Space Migration Plan all this while."

Part 7[edit]

"…You're right. I heard that every elected Prime Minister had taken up the post of the Migration Issues Committee Leader before. Doesn't that you…you know?"

Mrs Barrows raised the duck confit on the fork as she gave a pondering look while looking over at everyone's faces that were seated on the table. She was showing off such indecent table etiquette as if she was at a restaurant in town, but the other ladies did not frown so easily. Their faces that were full of make-up showed appropriate cordial smiles as they looked around on the long table, giving either envious or evaluating looks at the couple that organized this party.

"Not all the Prime Ministers were like that."

Cynthia Marcenas was probably used to such stares as she showed neither an inviting smile nor an annoyed smile, calmly dodging this topic at hand with some words she thought about on the fly. The daughter of the Marcenas family showed a graceful and fearless princess appearance as she kept an observing look, noting where she was in. She, who was almost 30, had the flair of a female host who had experienced all sorts of turbulent moments. "My my, you're so modest about it." Cynthia gave a smile that had some invisible hesitance towards this flattery as she quickly glanced through the table, not forgetting to check if everyone's wine glasses were filled.

"No no no, please just leave it at that! If not, I'll probably be so pressurized as a son-in-law that I won't have room to breathe!"

Patrick, who was sitting beside Cynthia, spoke with a voice that boomed throughout the room, putting a stop to this delicate topic. Patrick had a sportsman-like tall and muscular physique, an earnest smile, and had sincere gestures that were welcomed by the old people. These were unique inherent qualities that made him attractive, but the impression had on him was that he studied well. Before he

married in, Patrick was working as an underling of Ronan, and until this point, where he was running for a local election, he took the important role of first secretary, and he was trained this way for the future. But on closer inspection, there would be signs of aspects he was not natural in, so it would depend on his qualifications if he could stand out here and make his way to the Dakar Committee proudly. At this point, his first duty would be to act as a cheery host for this party and wrangle for local support. However, he probably did not expect the atmosphere brewed by the powerful local ladies to be so hard to deal with.

After the war, B&D Inc. managed to revive itself, and Mrs Barrows was the wife of the chairman of that enterprise. She was also the president of the women's support group, and because of her lead, one could see people like the wife of the chairman of the sunbelt area revival association, the wife of a protestant pastor from South America that still had many believers in the South, and the wife of a leading Farmers' association president. There were less than 10 middle-aged women seated around the long table in the dining room, and they pretended to look courteous and fearful that they were invited to the mansion of a powerful Senator, but there was no doubt that these people thought that they should be invited here. These people approached the high-ranking senator who would most likely be the next Prime Minister, and eyed for a chance to offer their graces while showing their powerful backings without leaving anything behind. They would always show that they could determine the fate of a political whenever they had the time. Their husbands had such shameless thoughts, thinking that they should leave everything in society to the politicians, and if there were a need, they should create politicians with their own hands, and in front of Mineva's eyes, the ladies were a splitting reflection of their arrogance.

Mineva's stomach felt heavy as she swallowed her sigh, and it was a difficult thing for her to put the duck into the mouth. *So is this the truth behind politics of absolute democracy? That how power with the people is determined by buying and selling of votes?* She memorized everything about ruling, but this was too intense for her body that never had the chance to interact with the real society. She cautiously read the atmosphere as she again realized that she was in a delicate situation.

As Riddhe had been talking to Ronan all this while, Mineva did not have the chance to plan any lines, and she was overwhelmed by Cynthia's bulldozer-like hospitality, so she could only attend this party as Audrey Burne. It was the complete opposite of what Cynthia said

about a relaxed family party as the food that was served was a French full course, the red wine were top-class Eighties bottles that were opened, and there were 6 servants on standby around the dining table. It was obvious to see that as the host, they were planning to use their wealth show their true prosperity to the ladies of the rich and powerful, and it was obvious to see that. Even the gown Mineva was wearing was a customized branded product Cynthia ordered during her life as a student. Cynthia herself said *"It's already outdated, but it's fine if the person wearing it is good looking"*, but Mineva could only think about standard dress uniform when it came to formal dress attire, so she could not tell the differences in that. She found it difficult to adapt to the bare shoulders and arms design, and in the end, she did not know how to adapt as she could only spend time listening to the empty conversations.

"As for the young lord, he's an elite who graduated from the officer cadet academy. I'm really envious of it."

Mrs Barrows did not thank the servant who poured red wine for her as she increased her volume, seemingly drank. She, whose fat arms would shudder whenever she raised the knife, seemed more concerned about the private life of a Senate Council member than the future of a local election candidate's future in front of her. When Ronan popped by to greet them before retreating, she was the one who wanted him to stay, "Another one of my relatives was an officer." Another lady continued.

"But he's retired, and he's now a consultant at Anaheim Group."

"Oh my. So that means he's an elite as well?"

"Will you enter politics in the future and help in your father's work?"

The Cynthia couple's expression froze, and Dwiyon, who was on standby behind, showed a tense expression on his face as well. As the ladies focused at one point, Mineva could only force herself to look over at the seat beside her, at the face of the person in question.

Ever since the self-introduction from before, Riddhe did not say anything, and even at this point, he looked like he did not care about his surroundings. He looked very distracted as he moved his knife and fork, stuffing the unsliced duck into his mouth. He had been looking like this ever since he talked to Ronan. *Did they break off on rather bad terms?* As Mineva wondered, Cynthia spoke up, "My little brother here is bad at it." and Mineva turned to look at her.

"His mind isn't sharp except when it comes to piloting mobile suits,

right, Miss Audrey?"

Help me carry on, please? Her eyes were telling Mineva this. Mineva could not say anything immediately as she merely gave an awkward smile. "Speaking of which, how you heard of it? There was a terrorist attack again!" Another person's voice caused her heart to jump.

"Yeah yeah yeah. It happened on Anaheim's industrial colony, right? It's said that the Neo Zeon remnants did it."

"Space really is scary. Will all the people die once there's a hole pierced through the colony? They're like fish in a tank. I'm trembling whenever I think about it."

"And those Zeon mobile suits, are they called "Zakus"? They did come here during the war. Those mobile suits have only one eye, their shoulders have some spike like thing. They really don't look like things humans will create."

"They're people who threw people colonies and meteors onto Earth. They're different in both common sense and thoughts from us after all."

"Most of them are people whose parents and brothers were born in space, and they never came down to Earth, I suppose? It's a little too direct to say that, but they're still aliens after all. To the Spacenoids, Earth is basically a resource colony. If we granted their self-governance, who knows what will happen? That's why we have to manage it well."

Lines after lines continued to jab at Mineva's bare shoulders like sharp needles, seemingly trying to pierce. Ding, "Excuse me, madams." Cynthia tapped the glass as her words attracted everyone's attention.

"Please avoid discriminatory remarks. My husband will be worried if this would be a trap set up by the media."

Patrick followed up on this joke with some grumbling. *Well, hohoho*, the ladies let out laughter. Mineva exhaled slightly, and was about to gulp down the glass full of water, but another voice, "Miss Audrey, may I know where you're from?" causing her to choke on it.

"If you're related to the Anaheim Group, I suppose you're from the Moon?"

"The Moon is a nice place. Unlike Spacenoids, moon residents are full of common sense. They have low gravity, and it's nice for beauty. I'm thinking of going there myself once, but I really can't decide after hearing that it'll take more than 3 days to get there on a spaceship…"

Mineva could not and had no reason to go along with what they said as she looked away from the women of Earth lined up in front of her. *Just smile and act along and everything will be fine*— she understood, but she could not give this kind of smile to them. This would be belittling her parents, and it would be blasphemy to the soldiers who died. All sorts of words raged in her mind, and as she clenched the fists on her knees, the sound of a chair being moved back rang.

Riddhe stood up as he did not look at anyone, but straight forward as he left the scene wordlessly. The footsteps of the boots were filled with anger, shocking the cold atmosphere. The grey officer uniform disappeared behind the door, and the ones left in the dining room were the stunned stupefied looks of the women.

“Did we say something to dampen his mood?”

Mrs Barrows asked, and in response to her puzzled and curious face, Cynthia immediately rounded off, “Sorry.”

“It seemed that he saw something devastating during the terrorist attack from before. He’s been like this ever since he got home. Please don’t mind.”

Cynthia said as she gave a quiet look to Mineva, asking her what was going on. Patrick too inadvertently met Mineva in the eyes, and Mineva scanned the expressions all the ladies gave. She lost the chance to chase Riddhe and could only move the fork to stuff the duck into her mouth that had already lost appetite. As she wanted to stuff it in, “Speaking of which, isn’t the son of Mr. Barrows…” Cynthia’s voice filled up this emptiness.

Part 8[edit]

The atmosphere at the seats cooled off, and it took about 10 minutes before Mineva could leave her seat naturally. She left the party with a stomach full of undigested food, and walked around the mansion, trying to look for Riddhe.

It was unknown if most of the servants went to help out with the party as the mansion was completely quiet. Ronan should be working inside the house, but there was no way to detect his presence in this large mansion. Mineva went from the hall to the stairs, passed through the empty wide corridor, and went forward. She saw Riddhe’s back as he stood on the terrace facing the courtyard.

At this moment, the wall clock let out a sound, and it was 18.30. If the time was taken at Greenwich Meridian standard, it would be 23.30 in

space. She looked up at the digital clock that showed both timings, and again understood that she was in a place that was very distant. She passed through the door that was opened and stepped onto the terrace. The wind blowing by the courtyard caused the curtains to flutter, flipping some pages of a book that was being read.

Riddhe continued to stare at the trails of the setting red Western sky as his back did not move. The sounds of the helicopters flying from afar were mixed in amongst the winds, causing the trees surrounding the courtyard to buzz unsteadily.

Mineva looked up at the sky that was turning from orange to blue and to a deep indigo color, and smelled the flavor of the evening wind that had the presence of night hidden in it. “I’m sorry” the voice entered her ears, and she looked forward, staring right at Riddhe’s back as he still looked forward. She lowered her face and said, “There’s no need for you to apologize…”

“I feel that this is reality too. If I continue to remain in Neo Zeon, I wouldn’t know all of these things.”

This might be a good chance to learn. Mineva muttered in her depressed heart, but she could not find any words to overcome these words that were full of such prejudice. She thought that mutual understanding was just a dream, and she remained unable to breathe in this helplessness of hers. “That’s not it.” Riddhe said as his shoulders trembled, and he clenched his hands that were on the handrails tightly.

“That’s not what I want to talk about…”

The sunset showed the figure of the shoulders, and the shoulders were trembled, probably because he was crying. That was not an emotion that could be caused by a breakdown in talks between him and Ronan, and Mineva sensed that there was a greater despair and sense of loss here, “Riddhe…” she called him, and approached his trembling figure.

Suddenly, that back profile left the handrails, and Riddhe turned to Mineva, his chest filling her sights. Mineva was hugged around the shoulders as she was pulled to him, and he embraced her in his clutches.

“I’m sorry, I…I actually brought you to such a unthinkable place…!”

Riddhe’s arms that were hugging Mineva exerted more force as he uttered out such unperceivable words, sounding like he was trying to squeeze out all the fluids in his body. Mineva wanted to push her aside, but notice that she had no place to exert strength, and was shocked as she felt Riddhe’s body warmth.

“No matter what, I’ll protect you well no matter what, so please stay here, stay by me…don’t leave me alone…”

Water droplets that had warmth dripped on her hair, wetting her forehead. *Why is he crying? What’s causing him so much pain? At that moment, Mineva had no sense of uneasiness or disgust as she felt Riddhe’s trembling body with her own. She hesitated over whether she should put her arms around him, and she looked at the sky that was entering the night from past the shoulders wearing the military uniform.*

Mineva saw the stars flicker on the other end of the thick atmosphere. That star looked much more gentler than what she saw in space, but it

was so blurry and hard to grasp sight of.

Part 9[edit]

It may be most appropriate to describe this as a donut that was bitten off. The ring-shaped construct that was 500m in diameter did revolve in the past and created enough centrifuge gravity within its inner walls to match the gravity of the moon, but what was supposed to be a Stanford Torus-type space station was left with a part of a ring, and it became a debris that was less than 150m long, floating amidst the vacuum. The warning lights flickered on the gradually curved cylinder, and the way it floated above Earth either looked like a bitten donut or a carcass of a whale—and the dismal look of it was such that it was reminiscent of a rotten corpse with its bones baring halfways.

““Laplace”, huh?”

“This is the first place we’ll think about when we talk about “Laplace Box’ alright…”

Otto mused to himself, and Liam followed up with a slow voice. Both of them were staring at the main screen of the bridge in front of them, and the image displayed on it was the debris of “Laplace”. 96 years ago, this place collapsed with the start of the Universal Century, and this Prime Minister official residence, together with the first Prime Minister, became scraps, and the scene in front of their eyes was weathered for a long time. The force from the explosion caused “Laplace” to accelerate, and it once moved along the long and wide oval orbit. Then, after many years of gravity, it finally returned back to its original orbit as it overlooked Earth.

“Laplace” was a large piece of space debris that was very likely to become an orbital obstacle, but because of its historical value, the government decided to carry out methods of preservation on it. Thus, this historical site was left at a height of 200km, along with the artificial satellites that totaled to less than 500. Its orbital path was through the north and south poles, and it needed only 90 minutes to orbit around. With this orbital motion and the Earth revolving around, the “Laplace” could basically navigate through the entire territory of Earth in 24 hours. It really seemed to fit the impression of a Prime Minister residence as it was not rooted at a specific area or country, but “Laplace” continued to slow down even till this day, and some predicted that it would soon fall onto Earth in a few years. Of course, by that time, “Laplace” would probably be broken down before that happened, and the large number of fragments would burn out once it reached the atmosphere.

There would definitely be photos of “Laplace” in history textbooks, but they would not look too much into it unless they were researchers and scholars in this discipline. This might be the first time since the terrorist attack 100 years ago that the army carried out an investigation. “This feels like it’s nothing much, you know.” Liam said this, and Otto shrugged, saying,

“I feel the same, but it’s a fact that this is the place the coordinates from the Laplace Program indicated. Latitude 0, Longitude 0, 200km in height. The debris of “Laplace” will definitely pass by here every day.”

The object would never remain at a single point on the low orbit formed by the powerful force of Earth’s gravity. Since the “Box” floating at a specific point was not a joke, they could not ignore the possibility of the “Laplace” debris being linked with the “Box” as it would float past the place regularly, or rather, there was no other possibility to investigate. “You’re right, but…” Liam showed a bitter expression on her face as she turned to the debris of “Laplace”.

“If the “Laplace Box” is really there, this really isn’t something that can be described as a lamp on a ten-foot pole, lighting everything from afar but not in close anymore. It’s like a bad joke.”

“Seriously, ever since the social studies visit in primary school, I’ve never been as close to this place. That’s the starting point of the Universal Century, the extremely infamous “Laplace Incident” history… for example.”

At this point, the battleship was approximately 400km in height, 8,000km away from “Laplace”. Otto confirmed that the “Nahel Argama” was about to pass by the border between space and sky as it gradually closed in on the intersection point with “Laplace”, but was shocked by a line, “At my time, it was removed from the learning course.”

Otto and Liam both turned around at the same time, and saw Alberto in a white heavy normal suit, using one hand to hold a briefcase.

“You took care of me, Captain. You too, First Officer.”

He did not even show a courteous smile as he suddenly reached his hand out. There was a spaceship approaching the “Nahel Argama”, ready to receive the people from Anaheim. Alberto’s unexpected orderly attitude caused Otto to hold back a wry smile as he and Liam glanced at each other. He held Alberto’s hand and said, “We too…but I really can’t pretend to say this.”

“We suffered a lot because of you. I probably won’t forget your face in such a short time.”

He was not trying to be sarcastic. Having once stood on the boundary of life and death for more than a week, Otto would feel some attachment to such a face as well. Alberto's face twitched and pulled back his hand, saying, "It's really a pity that I can't see through the investigations…" He looked away, not hiding the ashamed feeling within him. Otto seemed to realize that the other man was hiding something under his thick facial skin as he frowned.

"I'll pray for the long-lasting military luck of this battleship. Now then."

Alberto lifted his face, said that, and did not even have the time to look right back at them as he stepped off the floor. He immediately pasted through the bridge door and went to the elevator together with his subordinates that were waiting outside the room. *During this journey, he was probably touched in some way.* Otto forgot the uneasiness that crept slightly in him as he watched that back profile he most likely would not see a second time, only to hear Liam say, "How strange."

"That guy's been so insistent on getting the "Box", and now he's leaving the ship without seeing the outcome."

"He's been making mistakes all this time anyway. Most likely, he's being relieved of his duties. The investigation results will likely reach Anaheim's ears through the Senate Council's anyway, and he's just an underling who's supposed to serve authority."

"Is that all?"

Liam continued softly as she did not look away from Alberto, who left through the door. Otto looked at the side of her face.

"I'm wondering about why the Senate Council would allow the prisoner to follow them. Even though Anaheim intends to use this trip to Earth to drop the prisoner in a North American detention center, it's normally impossible to let a civilian ship move the prisoner. How does headquarters intend to deal with her?"

"The given reason is that there are no Newtype facilities on "Luna II"."

"What kind of facilities is needed? She's a patient, you know? Don't tell me they intend to send her to a Newtype-research…"

Newtype-research, or a Newtype-research facility. Otto felt a chill in his heart because of this place that was called a notorious human experiment plant, but answered, "You're thinking too much. The NT-research should be closed a long time ago." But Liam looked like she could not accept this as she said "That's good if that were the case."

"Besides, we can't provide ample treatment for her here. We can only

leave it—”

A slight tremor occurred inside the ship, causing Otto to swallow the words he was about to say. A blueish-white thruster flare glided past the bridge window at this time as it gradually merged into the silhouette of Earth that was showing night. The second squad of mobile suits started to launch. “Romeo 010 left ship.” Mihiro reported, and her voice came from the communication console on the starboard.

“Then, ECOAS 920, please get into launch sequence. RX-0, to the first catapult. Please leave the ship after ECOAS 920.”

During this week, Mihiro became rather poised as a communicator operator, and with her voice giving command, the mobile suits on the multi-monitor moved according to their designated action. The brown colored “Loto” with the serial number 920 on it stood on the 3rd catapult deck on the starboard in mobile suit form. The white frame of the RX-0, “Unicorn” stood on the elevator in the meantime, and was about to be moved from the mobile suit deck to the first catapult deck in the middle.

The “Unicorn” was preparing to launch with standard armaments, a customized beam rifle on its right hand, and a shield on its left hand, but at this moment, there was a cylindrical equipment latched on its backpack. it was probably a hyper bazooka. The maintenance team did contact the bridge, and they hoped to use this customized equipment for the “Unicorn” they reclaimed from the “Magallanica” for data collection as the machine prepared to launch.

It was an unknown situation with an unknown mobile suit. In this sense, the pilot would be a lab rat. Otto felt that even adults would try to avoid this situation as he looked at the communication monitor from past Mihiro’s shoulders. He could not see the expression of the pilot in the cockpit as it was blocked by the helmet visor.

“So he’s finally willing to ride on it…?”

Eh? Otto did not look at Liam’s doubtful expression that was shot right back at him, and he put his spine back in place on the Captain’s seat as he looked right in front. He saw that the current time was 22.30 on the screen’s digital clock, and Mihiro started communicating with the “Unicorn” at this point.

“Do you hear me, Banagher? The “Nahel Argama” is currently under low orbit on Earth. The movement and operation basics in space are still the same, but you have to be concerned about how gravity affects you. If you do not maintain a steady speed, you’ll be dragged down by

the gravity…”

Part 10[edit]

(…We haven’t confirmed that the “Unicorn” has atmospheric re-entry capabilities. In the case you do fall in, calm down and ask an assisting mobile suit for help. The “ReZELs” are equipped with atmospheric entry equipment, so it can feel the “Unicorn” onto Earth when necessary but this is to be the final emergency means. Do not look away from the speedometer and check where your allies are when piloting, understand?)

This is just a repeat of the briefing beforehand. What’s there I don’t know? Banagher suppressed this grumbling as he answered, “yes”, checking the machine status through the 3 display boards. The right arm and left leg that were damaged during the last battle were repaired, the airflow, mobility and controls were all fine, and the energy gain was higher than usual. After checking these, Banagher let his machine move forward and head towards the vacuum that opened on the other side of the shutter. He saw Earth, surrounded by the darkness of night, and let the stars that was in its profile enter his eyes. (ECOAS 920 left the ship.) Mihiro announced, and her voice echoed throughout.

The “Loto” floated slightly from the 3rd catapult on the starboard. This ECOAS transformable mobile suit, which was smaller than an ordinary mobile suit by 2 sizes, could not launch from the catapult as it was of a different specifications. This smaller machine let out vernier flares as it moved towards the outside of the ship step by step, and the “ReZEL” that transformed into Waverider form matched its velocity. The “Loto” then shot out its magic arm from its sleeve and grabbed onto the grip on the “ReZEL” from behind.

The thruster flares shot out, bringing the “ReZEL” ferrying the “Loto” on its back away. At this moment, (RX-0, equip catapult.) Mihiro notified, and Banagher let the machine’s feet step onto the slipper-shaped catapult. This was the fourth time he activated the “Unicorn”, but it was the first time he was launching on the catapult. His tense hands gripped onto the control sticks, and a certain thought that gathered in his mind beforehand suddenly popped up. He said out something he had not thought about a second ago.

“Erm, Ensign Mihiro, sorry about just now.”

(Understood. RX-0. Path is clear. Please proceed.)

The cold voice caused Banagher’s heart to feel like he was

abandoned. He looked through the communication window, and saw Mihiro's stiff expression as she communicated with the other machines. "Don't talk privately." The voice from behind felt like a beating on the heat.

"The launching window is in seconds. The operator has no time to worry about such unnecessary things."

Daguza was seated on the assistance seat located on the right side of the linear seat, looking like he was a robot ready to launch. He was piloting a mobile suit that would lose control without warning, and the one sitting beside him was a robot that was unemotional. Banagher asked himself for a moment, wondering why he was doing such a thing. "You know how to report when you leave the ship?" Daguza repeated, and Banagher responded "understood" as he exerted strength on his abdomen with reckless abandon.

"Banagher Links, "Unicorn", launching!"

The countdown timer indicated 0, and the deck crew standing beside the catapult immediately pulled down the conductance bar. The linear activated catapult unit started to advance as it shot out, and the "Unicorn", which was bending forward, immediately glided down the runway deck.

Banagher immediately felt that he was unable to breathe as his bones and flesh was rattling, pressed down on the linear seat. The G-force felt like it was about to force the eyeballs out relaxed, and the "Nahel Argama" that was shown on the rear surveillance window became really small and distant. Banagher pulled the control stick down somewhat. The backpack had a hyper bazooka that was more than 15m, and the rear skirt on the waist had Magnum catridges and bazooka magazines, so the machine felt heavier than usual. Considering that the machine would be affected by the gravity, it would be appropriate to set the AMBAC control 2 times more than usual. Banagher used the manual controls to reconfigure the settings, checked that the radar signal functions were normal, and moved at a relative velocity with the allied machine that went beforehand before Daguza could instruct him.

I'm getting used to it. Hassan's words appeared in his mind, and then disappeared. The Earth that was covered by night appeared below Banagher, and the continents he did not know appeared amidst the bottom of the shadows.

Part 11[edit]

The marker that left the “Mock Trojan Horse” started to close in on the marker that left first. Both of them went by the wire frame that indicated the 3 dimensional Earth, and looked like they were headed to the given coordinates.”

“Confirming that the 5th machine launched. It’s gradually meeting u with the 4th machine that launched first, and it’s moving towards the rendezvous.”

The crew member sitting on the navigation seat said. Zinnerman looked over Flaste, who swapped seats with Gilboa and was on the steering seat, and stared at the sensor screen that had multiple markers moving on it. “Is that the Gundam?” he asked, and the crew answered, “Unable to confirm. The psyco monitor has no response.” as his voice echoed through the bridge of the “Garencieres” that got into battle mode.

“Besides, I heard that the psyco monitor is activated together with the NT-D. So we can’t trace the signal when it’s in the lone horn phase… what about the Foundation’s ship?”

“It’s approaching the “Mock Trojan Horse”. If the “Mock Trojan Horse” slows down till the revolving speed in this situation, both sides will probably meet each other 10 minutes later. The location is 360km directly above the equator, 15 degrees longitude, 28 minutes.”

Zinnerman did not bother to finish listening to the crew member as he took up the communication mic. “Gael Chan, it’s just like what you heard.” He spoke as he opened a window on the captain seat’s console.

“The connecting will take about 15 minutes, but this is still tight on the time schedule. We’ll look for them once the two ships connect. Is that fine with you?”

(Couldn’t ask for any better.) Gael, who was seated inside the cockpit of the “Eye-Zack”, stared through the visor at Zinnerman. “If they’re trying to attach each other, it’ll be easier to determine each other’s movements. I’ll be able to catch the target in the shortest time possible.”

It was reckless, but Gael’s judgement was correct. If the Foundation’s ship was meant to ferry their own members, Martha’s subordinates would definitely be gathered at the airlock of the attachment. It would be easier to capture the target than to search aimlessly inside the ship. “Roger that. Good luck.” Zinnerman said, (Same to your side. It was a short while, but you took care of me) Gael answered with a rare

courteous voice.

(If both of us survive, let me treat you to a toast.)

“I’m not going to bear responsibility if there’s a stench of Zeon in the wine, you know?”

(There’ll always be exceptions…Gael Chan, launching.)

ROOM. There was a slight shock, and the fact that the “Eye-Zack” moved from the hangar at the rear reached everyone. The machine with a large radome-like hat on the head lit its vernier jets and attained relative velocity from the “Garencieres”, lighting it monoeye. The vacuum floated past it, and it let out flares from its main thrusters. At this point, it was sucked in towards the Earth that was large enough to fill his sights.

The “Mock Trojan Horse” was hidden amongst the night that dyed the hemisphere, intending to meet the Foundation’s ship. They probably would not expect a sudden raid within the absolute defense zone of Earth at a height close to the atmosphere. This would be the chance when the transport ship heads off to investigate the “Box”—Zinnerman switched the communication channel and spoke into the mic in his hands, saying, “Over to you, Gilboa.”

“Once that guy approaches the “Mock Trojan Horse”, start the distractions. Make things as chaotic as possible and try to buy him time. Marida should be located in the center of the ship, so some tremors should be okay.”

(I understand…but can we trust him?)

There were 3 “Geara Zulus” being dragged outside with the hangar, and Gilboa was seated in one of them with a blade antenna on the head, using a cautious voice that was befitting of his nature. To him, who had a family waiting for him back home, it was questionable why Gael would show such an expression that was devoid of tactics and self-preservation. Zinnerman did not think too much about the slight divide felt between him and his subordinate as he chimed in, “In terms of stupidity, that man can be said to be on an equal standing as us.”

“He’s like us in terms of stupidity too. I feel that he’s someone who can be trusted.”

Gilboa too felt that he was not a bad man (I understand) he repeated, and Zinnerman continued, “The Captain and his group will reach immediately. There’s also Tikva and the rest waiting. Don’t mess around.” He then cut the communication feed and looked forward. As

they were in the stage of battle, the bridge was tilted 90 degrees forward, and the window that would normally be seen in front disappeared. The bowl-shaped main screen was on the front end of the bridge, showing multiple windows, including the sensors screens, and Earth, which could be seen on the display, was half buried by these information.

During this operation, Gael would board the enemy ship alone and secure Martha's subordinate and Marida. *How exactly will that guy who has nowhere to return to like me fare?* There was less than an hour before Frontal's forces reached, and Zinnerman could only feel anxious while he waited for the outcome, and he looked at Earth that showed both areas of day and night clearly.

Is the princess safe? This doubt Zinnerman wanted to really avoid appeared from the blue planet, and it pressed down on his heavy heart even further.

Part 12[edit]

When looking down 200km from above, Earth looked more like a landscape than a planet. Anyone who kept looking down would have an impression that they could jump straight down.

Speaking of which, what kind of people are there? What kind of lives do they live? Banagher did not know the answer. From the message on the navigation system, he could tell that it was the Atlantic Ocean right below him, and the land lying in front was the African continent. He could also tell that there were small lights gathered at the coastline. They were the lights of the Federation government capital, Dakar, but that was all. Banagher could not imagine the flavor of the sea breeze from the shore or the heat of the desert or real gravity. He, who was born and grew up in the cylinder of a space colony, could not understand how the planet, a life-maintaining installation, worked, how that sphere could create its own gravity just by being there.

The grey clouds appeared beneath the darkness of night, and Earth showed its face towards the vacuum silently. *Audrey's there somewhere on this monstrously large sphere*—Banagher stared at the surface of the ocean that was floating below his feet, and saw the emerald-colored eyes on it. He said stiffly, "Currently moving to the designated coordinates" and turned his face to the front.

"3, 2, 1…we'll reach the designated coordinates. Latitude 0, Longitude 0, height 200km. No responses from the sensors. There is no reaction from the NT-D and the Laplace Program."

Daguza worked on the computer located in front of the assistance seat as he calmly made this report. Is this the coordinates given by the Laplace Program? It merely showed a zero for an instant, and Banagher checked that the monitor image switched back to latitude and longitude values, feeling frustrated as he looked around. (Understood. The trajectory and velocity of the “Relic” have not changed. There is still T-minus 1238 till it reaches the designated location. Currently on course with the machine.) Banagher heard Mihiro answer as he opened all sorts of sensor windows on the all-view monitor and re-inspected the CG-corrected visual. The movement sensor picked up the communication satellite within the range, and he could not see even a single piece of debris within his eyes. “We’ll now start to make contact with the relic” Banagher ignored Daguza’s words as he tried to look up at the “Nahel Argama” that was above him.

The ship that was at a height 400km above looked like one of the many stars. As for the ship that was attached, there was no presence to be felt, and it was impossible to confirm if it really existed. A spaceship made contact with the “Nahel Argama” to receive Alberto and the Anaheim people back. It was said that Marida would be riding on it and sent back to Earth as well. Banagher could not detect her psycowaves as he felt only uneasiness.

During the battle at “Palau”, I could sense the surroundings more acutely. The acute awareness that time, and that moment of “resonance”, was it all just a hallucination I saw in the midst of euphoria—

“What did you sense?”

Daguza asked. In the face of this esper-like instinct from him, Banagher could only answer “Nothing…” as he frantically looked forward.

“The machine’s system can take effect on your body through the psycommu. Tell me if there’re any slight changes.”

Banagher felt really uneasy by Daguza’s usual monotonous robotic-like tone, and he felt like he was treated as a cog. Before he was instructed, he held onto the control stick and let the machine turn to the course that was coming his way, and mused to himself in an audible voice, “We’re like idiots for doing this.” and Daguza’s stare shot onto the back of Banagher’s head, sharp enough to make a sound.

“What exactly is the “Box”? What kind of shape is it? How big is it? Is that something that’ll float around in such a place?”

“It’s because we don’t know that we’re currently investigating. Just concentrate on piloting. There’ll only be a chance for us to make contact with the relic.”

This would be what it meant by going straight to the point. Banagher endured the urge the let the thruster flares keep burning as he piloted the machine with the help of the navigation program. The “Unicorn” left the space above the Equator and arrived at the orbit hovering over the North and South poles. The “Unicorn” drew an arc over the Northern hemisphere, and the two “ReZELs”, each carrying a “Loto” followed the “Unicorn” as it drew an arc on the Earth’s surface.

The speedometer continued to accelerate, and the distance that was maintained at 200km continued to increase from time to time. If he used up too much flares, the machine would end up at a speed where it would leave orbit, and the machine would move away from the trajectory. He had to maintain a speed of 7.78km per second in low orbit, and the relic, the debris of “Laplace” was moving at the same speed as it orbited above the two poles. If they wanted to make contact with it, he would have to leave the space above the Equator and first try to negate the inertial speed it had gathered up till now, reduce the relative velocity and height of the machine and let the machine get back on the orbit above the two poles. They could not wait at the designated coordinates for the debris to reach. Once the machine stopped, the relative velocity with the Earth’s rotational speed would become zero, the machine would become a prisoner of gravity, and it would be dragged down to the atmosphere.

There was a need for the machine to keep fighting against the powerful gravity on Earth. This was the troublesome part about a mission in low orbit. If he did not follow the interacting course and activate the machine according to the time schedule, he would not be able to make contact with “Laplace” at the given coordinates. “Laplace” would only meet that place once every day, which meant that there was only one chance to make contact. *There’s only one chance,* Daguza was not kidding when he said these words, and Banagher cautiously piloted the “Unicorn” and let the machine head to the orbit above the two poles as it cut the equator. The relic in question was not at a distance where the human eye could spot, and the radar monitor was the only thing with a marker flickering as it was connected to a communication satellite.

“The Laplace Program will provide the information once it confirmed the machine’s location. One proof is how it did not show new information when the NT-D was activated.”

The intersecting course was half finished, and as Banagher slowed the machine down to let the autopilot take over, Daguza finally spoke up. Banagher did not look away from the values of all the meters as he merely listened to the man.

“Putting the “Laplace Box” at “Laplace”…it sure sounds stupid. Also, if the existence of the “Box” was viewed as something significant, someone would have investigated beforehand. However, this Laplace Program indicates that something is on this coordinate, and the debris of “Laplace” would pass by here every day at midnight. Latitude 0, longitude 0, midnight…there’s a hint to this coincidence. There’s some worth in investigating this.”

The time at this point was 23.44, and there was still 16 minutes until the three zeros intersect—Banagher felt a chilling presence approaching from the relic marker that was gradually closing in, and said, “It was originally meant to be on this orbit in the first place, so I suppose that’s how it should be.”

“It’s said that the debris that was gradually moving further away because of the explosion is starting to get pulled back by the gravity bit by bit onto its original orbit.”

“That’s true, but the hint of this coincidence isn’t just as such. The coordinates indicated by the program is at the exact same spot as the location where the “Laplace Incident” happened. At midnight, Universal Century 001, the Prime Minister residence “Laplace” was blown up at this place. The first prime minister of the Federation government and the representatives from each country were blown up here.

Banagher recalled the documentary he saw when this incident was introduced in history class, and had an overlapping vision of this space in front of him. As he did that, he felt his body cool immediately. As the whole world watched, that shape of “Laplace” collapsed without warning, and the donut-shaped living area exploded from inside. This happened approximately 100 years ago—

“After this Laplace Incident, the Federation government used the reason of security to not set up base in space. The Ereism and anti-government movements were being eradicated after that, and the One Year War happened in the end…now, everything in this world can be traced back to that “Laplace Incident”. If it had not happened—”

“Perhaps we might have a different world from now.”

Banagher seized the initiative to talk first as he turned around to ask, “…Is that how is it?”, and Daguza replied, “it’s pointless to think much

about it." not giving a denying or affirming look.

"The Federation government was an organization meant to conduct the Space Migration Plan. Countries, religions, races…in order to overcome all these shackles and send half of humanity to space, they'll have to create an absolute authority that will exert its strength. Humans create their own gods to save this planet that was reaching its limits due to population explosion and global warming."

Daguza glanced aside to look at the African continent that could be seen through the clouds as he said this. As technology advanced, humanity managed to prolong its lifespans, and as the theory of feeding an exploding population would eat into resources came about, Earth in the old ages stared to accelerate towards its destruction. There were only two options to choose from, whether to reduce their civilization, or to look at other means of survival, and humanity chose the latter and lived on. However, it was not easy to fulfill this option. If there were ten people, there would be a need to convince 10 different thought processes. To ensure that everyone was on the same page, it was imperative to have a certain organization with absolute authority and power. it had to be an dictator, one that did not know mercy, one that was arrogant, and one that would not listen to what other people said.

Only humans have Gods…is this how it is? Banagher felt a pulsating in a part of his brain he did not feel before as he felt hot there, and muttered, "They tried to turn the Federation government…into a god." The lights of Dakar were so far they could not be seen, and the Gulf of Guinea that was right below the coordinates they were on was asleep in deep darkness.

"There aren't a lot of things that can be solved through negotiations. A stop-gap organization that does not have any power will only lead to tragedy. The United Nations of the old centuries proved this. In order to allow Earth and humanity to live on, the god that doesn't know mercy will force all those who defy to submit…to the Federation government that had such an absolute nature, the "Laplace Incident" was an accident that happened at the right time. It not only gave the Federation government an excuse to sweep all opposition, but could also allow its power to continue running under the name of relief aid in emergency situation. Thus, this failsafe of arrogance ended up in their hands."

"But how…you mean that the "Laplace Incident" was something the Federation government enacted themselves?"

This was a point that would definitely appear when talking about

conspiracies. Banagher too saw similar kinds of movies, but it had a completely different weight when an adult like Daguza was talking about this. In response, Daguza answered, “The truth is still shrouded in darkness.”

“However, such things do happen in the adult world from time to time. Once a fetter is set up, the task of protecting the fetter itself would become something the adults had to deal with, and this would cause them to lose their ability to view things from an objective standpoint. It is the same with the “Laplace Box”, I believe. Currently, none of the Central Cabinet members and the officials know what is it about. They had to remain fearful of the “Box”, and they continued to protect this “Box”, creating a symbolic relationship with the Vist Foundation that lasted for 100 years.”

“Fetter…”

“This can’t be changed with individual strength, and they have no intention of changing. The organization itself is swallowed by their instincts to protect themselves, and unknowingly, that group of people became cogs that only cared about protecting themselves. This can happen to any organization, not just the Federation.”

But as he said this, Daguza looked like he had not changed into a cog completely as he showed a determined look on his face. Banagher felt that he finally managed to connect with this robot that had a nerve as he glanced at that person’s eyes, saying cautiously, “It’s said that the “Box” has the power to topple the Federation.”

“Like, what if that “Box” contains information relating to the truth of the “Laplace Incident”…”

“That’s not very possible. It happened 100 years ago, so all the people involved should be dead. I don’t think a scandal of that level will be able to uproot the Federation like that. If it’s not something that involves something more basic, the basis behind the “Box” will not be established till now.”

What is it then? Banagher swallowed this doubt that was about to rise out from his throat and stared at the display board. *It’s because we don’t know that we’re investigating.* Daguza would probably answer something like this. No matter what the content of the “Box” was, he, who stood on the side protecting the Federation, would not have any other theories. If Banagher criticized Daguza, he would just be doing so to the wrong person. He understood that if he could be so self-aware in this world he was protected in, that he was born and raised in the grace of civilization, all careless critiques would end up returning

back to him. The “fetter” Daguza talked about would refer to social order.

Cardeas ignored the will of the Federation and wanted to release the “Box”, and Marida and the other Neo Zeon people were trying to get the “Box”; from this viewpoint, both parties would be viewed as people breaking the order, while the Federation government Daguza and the rest represented would be the people hunting these resisting forces and protecting the order in this distorted environment…ever since they were born, they were chose to bear an arrogant fate, and they were a group of gods who did not understand mercy. The Federation lost a lot of its power during the One Year War, but it still intended to recover and regain that power. They built the “Unicorn” mobile suit, wanted to use it to eradicate all remaining forces of Zeon, and even get the “Box” back—a sigh leaked out from Banagher’s hot head as he turned his tired stare at Earth that was still sleeping in the night.

It was the starting place of the Universal Century, and this might be the historical point of disagreement the Federation government committed to remain intact. If we really find the “Box” here, what’ll happen? Do we hand it over to the Federation? This misery that had lasted for 100 years would vanish, and there would be nothing that could threaten the Federation. The full-scale war Audrey was worried about would not happen, and the current social order can be protected, but what next?

They have the power to fight the government, and intended to use this hope that was woven out since 100 years ago, but unknowingly, they themselves became monsters—this Vist Foundation Cardeas spoke of was like this. That was why he installed the Laplace Program inside the “Unicorn” and used it as the marker leading to the “Box”. Whether I’m blood related or not, I received this machine through mere coincidence. Even if he tells me do what I should do, I don’t know what to think. I just want to save Audrey. I don’t have the strength to bear this world…

“Don’t think too much.”

Daguza said, seemingly throwing a stone at the surface of the lake, and Banagher recovered as he turned his eyes to the other man.

“Just concentrate on piloting this thing and help us with our investigations. No matter what the “Box” really is, it’s not worth exchanging the future of a child like you.”

Amongst all the words Banagher heard up till now, this line was definitely the most shocking. Banagher suspected whether the other man’s mouth really moved this way as he stared at Daguza’s face seriously. Daguza awkwardly looked away and said gruffly, “Focus on looking in front.”

“Our target’s a debris that’s not as large as a battleship. It’ll soon come close once we detect it. Watch out.”

After saying that, Daguza never looked at Banagher, and did not intend to talk. “I understand.” Banagher said as his lips curled up, and he felt relaxed as he looked forward. *As the Captain said, Daguza was not a thorough robot. If such a person exists, there won’t be any problems if we hand the “Box” over to the Federation.* Banagher mindlessly thought about this as he felt the heavy pressure striking him fade somewhat, but felt really puzzled by the lack of constancy the man showed.

If the Daguza who said this line was real, the Daguza who would use hostages without regret for a mission would be real as well. He had a nature hidden under his oppositely opposite iron mask, and used his own sense of responsibility to restrain the resentfulness he could not show to others. Banagher felt repulsed by this kind of adult, but he felt that somewhere in his heart, there existed a recognition for Daguza.

This was one of the ‘fetters’—it was difficult to identity who were true to their hearts, but if he could not trust this kind of thing, what could he use to judge something in the future? He had to believe in the bonds between people and get ready to trust others. He could not trust like how he did so when facing Riddhe, and perhaps it was a hallucination created due to the euphoria during the battle, just like how it was from that ‘resonance’ with Marida. *If I were a real Newtype, I should be able to see through the true nature of others and understand them perfectly.*

The Earth merely showed its face in the night, and Banagher held onto the control sticks again as he shut off all meaningless thoughts.

Part 13[edit]

23.55. The debris of “Laplace” could be detected from a point in the vacuum, and in an instant, it became a huge block that filled the sights of the all-view monitor. Banagher continued to take note of the height meter and the speedometer as he gradually reduced the relative

velocity of the “Unicorn” with “Laplace” and let it approach the let debris.

The ring-shaped construct fragment in front of him used to be a living area, and it was 40m long in diameter and approximately 130m in length. It was large, and the word “Laplace’ could be seen on the remaining outer wall. The pillars that poked out like whale ribs and the shattered glass that was used to retain light were the only visible things left of its past glory. It was thorough devastation, and there was no other way to describe this relied. This cosmic dust that filled the space gathered like sand in the wind, and the word “Laplace” became hard to determine, and this image was very consistent with the aged ruins.

The inside was hollow, and it was not too difficult for a machine to slip in. Banagher took note not to touch the metal frames and pillars that were extended out as he let the “Unicorn” dive inside the ring. If the “Unicorn” carelessly knocked into a construct, the debris ferrying it would slow down, and may cause the balance between “Laplace” and Earth’s gravity to collapse. It had become old and weak, but there was no guarantee that the debris could burn completely if it entered the atmosphere, and there was no need to imagine what would happen if a thing of such mass fell onto the surface. “Don’t touch anything.” Daguza said with a suppressed voice, and Banagher cautiously moved the machine. Soon, the relative velocity with the machine and the debris became zero, and the “Unicorn” moved into this hollow that was reminiscent of a whale’s stomach before ceasing all movements.

In the past, the ring would be lit by the sunlight through the reflective mirrors, and there was a centrifuge gravity at the same level as that of the Moon created within, but the scene inside at this point was at such a state where it would be an understatement to call it dilapidated. It was a large scrap of metal formed by twisted and deformed materials, ripped walls, and beams that were exposed to vacuum for almost 100 years. *To think that it would be abandoned in such a place—no, it’s because it’s this place that they can put it here, is it?* The all-view monitor image that switched to the actual footage was optically corrected, and Banagher tried to look around the debris. The shattered remains of lighting glass showed a reflection of the “Unicorn”s white body, and it looked so mysterious it was like a ghost looking back at him.

“Even if we compare with the past camera records, there aren’t any obvious differences we can see. It’s really hard to imagine that someone would do something to it…”

Daguza said slowly as he compared the current image with the data from the computer at his hands. It seemed that the debris was not touched by anyone ever since it was treated as a relic and had warning lights set around it. “Then, are the coordinates the most important thing?” Banagher asked.

“I don’t know. Even though we let the machine pass through the given coordinates, nothing happened. If the Laplace Program can identify the shape of this debris, we might hae to let the machine reach the given coordinates together with it…”

Daguza’s unspecified words caused Banagher’s stomach to hurt. He could imagine what was not mentioned. The Laplace Program would show the information about the “Box” through the activation of the NT-D. if that were the case, arriving at this given space coordinates would not trigger anything. Banagher could also predict that if he did not activate the NT-D, he would not be able to progress onto the next step.

He gathered the depressed feeling deep within his mind as fuel, and it felt his body and mind would become like a reactor core that would explode continuously—no matter what happened, Banagher did not want to ride on this gadget that would transform into a “Gundam”. He looked down and held onto the control sticks, “I said that you shouldn’t think too much.” but a voice caused him to look up.

“The answer will come. We just have to wait inside this debris and float to the given coordinates.”

Daguza said, and in front of his sights, the clock on the display board showed 23.58. There were less than 2 minutes until the debris of “Laplace” moved to its given coordinates, but either way, the NT-D would not activate at will. Banagher wiped away the sweat on his forehead, and held his breath as he waited for that moment.

The two “ReZELs” that were on standby outside the debris looked like they gulped too, waiting for events to develop. The two “Lotos” that got away from its back circled around the debris, taking footages of the exterior of “Laplace”, and the floodlights installed on the shoulders would shine inside the debris from time to time. “Make it as detailed as possible, carry out observations from the outside. If there are any changes, report to me.” Daguza notified the allied unit, and Conroy answered, (Roger that. Nothing abnormal for now.) There was still 30 seconds until it reached the target point.

20 seconds, 15 seconds, Daguza started to count down when there was less than 10 seconds left, “8, 7, 6…” the voice caused the atmosphere inside the cockpit to tense up. Latitude 0, longitude 0,

midnight; the time left before this moment was—

“3, 2, 1…target reached point zero.”

The clock and the display board both showed zero, and the date was changed to 15th April. The machine’s functions were normal, and there was no anomaly confirmed on the outside. The debris of “Laplace” remained dead silent just like a second ago.

The latitude, longitude and time numbers were indicated on the digital display, and the moment the three zeros crossed each other ended. 5 seconds after the time was shown, Banagher tried to look behind. The space of the given coordinates did not show any change even after it floated behind. Earth continued to remain in the slumber of night, and there was only an endless vacuum on the low orbit.

So nothing happened in the end. “So, what happened…?” In response to Daguza’s question, Banagher continued to look around with a calmed expression as he answered, “Even if you ask, there’s still nothing…” Daguza continued to show an emotionless expression as he asked with a calm expression, “Any changes on the outside?” (Negative, there’s no change with the “Unicorn” and the relic.) Conroy answered. During this time, Daguza checked all the sensors and compared the current situation with past footage, but once the relic was 200km away from the designated location, he exhaled.

“Did Cardeas Vist pull a fast one on us…?”

Daguza rubbed his eyes and rubbed his shoulders with his hands. Banagher saw him give that slightly wry look as his tense emotions relaxed. He seemed relaxed by it, and felt strangely emotional that this was more puzzling than before, and looked up at the space from past the pillar that was uprooted. The actual sight of space was near total darkness, and without the various information indicated on the monitor, it would be easy to forget that this was space.

The bright starry lights entered his eyes, but even though they were bright, they could not overcome the abyss of darkness. *How memorable,* this term suddenly appeared in Banagher’s mind, and just as he was wondering why he would have some a random thought from nowhere, he noticed that noise was coming from the speakers inside his helmet, and he could hear a soft speaking voice mixed in it.

(…Greetings…citizens of Earth and Space…I’m the Prime Minister of the Earth Federation, Ricardo Marcenas.)

This voice that came through the noise increased in clarity. Banagher widened his eyes in surprise as he looked around aimlessly. He,

together with Daguza who was looking around the cockpit, met each other in the eyes. Both of them showed frozen looks for just a moment, “Where’s that voice coming from?” Daguza questioned with a sharp tone, and Banagher hurriedly reached for the display board.

(The end of A.D. is nigh, and we shall enter an unknown territory called Universal Century. During this momentous time…)

As Banagher operated on the wireless electronic panel to check where the message came from, Conroy’s voice interrupted, (Where’s this voice coming from?). It seemed that the other machines were hearing this ‘voice’ as well. “I don’t know. You guys can’t detect the source of this signal?” as Daguza asked behind him, Banagher summoned out all the communication channels onto the display, and he scanned all the communication channels, ranging from short frequency to long frequency, including optical signals, but after scanning through them, he still could not find any information that matched this ‘voice’.

(And right now, for us, who have achieved the longstanding desire to unify the world, we have defined the errors in Nationalism. Just as humans can’t exist on their own, we know that countries can’t operate alone.)

(RX-0, the relic’s giving off a broadcast. Can you detect the source ?)

The broadcast Mihiro made overlapped with the voice of an unknown man at this point. “It’s coming from the relic?” Daguza wondered, and Banagher again looked at the all-view monitor showing the inner walls of the relic. The system had already done all sorts of scans with its sensors. The “Nahel Argama” could detect this voice even from 200km away, and it was really hard to imagine that such a powerful electronic signal could be hidden amongst this thoroughly dilapidated ruin. In fact, even the sensors on the “Unicorn” were not showing the existence of this wireless signal.

It’s like the voice of a dead person— Banagher felt goosebumps all over his body as he gulped. (This situation…there’s no doubt.) Conroy’s gruff voice caused the speakers to tremor unsteadily.

(We can detect from here that the source is the “Unicorn”. The “Unicorn” used up all the channels to let out this voice…!)

The “Loto” floating at the other end of the beam showed how shaken its passengers were as its stout body trembled. Daguza could not say anything, and Banagher suddenly felt that his presence was distant as his hands that let go of the control sticks were frozen, unable to move. He could not catch up to this situation in front of him, and he could not

bring himself to carry out the rational action of checking on the system as he continued to hear the voice of the ghost ringing in his helmet.

(The migration shall begin officially, and many people living in space colonies will be the norm in future generations. This glorious result of humanity uniting together, is to save the Earth from us crushing it.)

(I heard of this in a history program. This was the speech the assassinated Prime Minister Ricardo made.)

(I've checked. This dialogue is exactly the same as the one in the library. What we're hearing now is the Prime Minister speech before the "Laplace Incident" happened…"

では、その次は……？　答えられないバナージを見つめ、〈ラプラス〉の亡霊が嗤う。〈ユニコーン〉の一角がゆらりと持ち上がり、白い装甲の継ぎ目から赤い光が漏れ始めた。〈本文より〉

Conroy and Mihiro's excited voices overlapped this 'voice'. Almost 100 years ago, the first Prime Minister of the Federation government made this speech from "Laplace"—but it was blown up because of a terrorist attack, and this voice would be the ghost that was still floating between space and Earth. "Is this the doing of the Laplace Program…?" Banagher could no longer hear Daguza mutter as he understood that this 'voice' that was ringing inside his helmet and drilling through his

cranium was seeping deep into his consciousness. It was opening a door that he could not open on his own, one he never opened, and this 'voice' that was overflowing with discourse gradually filled his consciousness.

(If Anno Domini was really the infancy of humanity, then the Universal Century shall be the next state. We're not lowering the population through birth control, but chose to open more space for the population to move.)

That's right, the Earth Federation government was set up for this. Banagher confirmed. It was an emergency aid organization in charge of ceasing all conventions and eliminating those who defy it. The Federation was given the largest authority in history, and in that sense, it could be said that it was a god created by humanity, the symbolism of absolute…but what exactly would a God be? Was He a concept created by humanity, an existence that resided in people's hearts? A certain person said before that He was possibility, the source of power that separated humanity from the many species of animals, the source of power that allowed humanity to step into space. This was a great power that was used to create their ideals, and to approach their ideals. Humanity created lots of sacrifices and fulfilled the possibility of an absolute government—

(A baby that climbs out of the cradle must continue to grow. In the process of fulfilling the plan to migrate to space, we're proving to the entire world that we can co-exist for one goal. Then, what's next?)

The 'voice' continued to ask, but there was no answer. *We still remain in the possibility that we created 100 years ago. Even until now, we still can't get out of the cradle, and we can't face this God called possibility.* The overflowing words gathered on Banagher's forehead, and radiated out as a thin flash, and he felt his consciousness *fly*. Everything around him, from Daguza who was seated beside him, to his body that was seated on the linear chair, became hard to identify. At the other end of the radiating light, Banagher saw a hallucination of the 'voice's owner smiling back at him.

Then, what's next—? The ghost of Laplace showed a mocking smile at Banagher who was unable to answer. The lone horn of the "Unicorn" rose up slightly, and a red glow started to seep out from the gaps between the white armor.

では、その次は――？　答えられないバナージを見つめ、〈ラプラス〉の亡霊が嗤う。〈ユニコーン〉の一角がゆらりと持ち上がり、白い装甲の縁が目から赤い光が漲り始めた。〈本文より〉

Chapter 3[edit]

Part 1[edit]

(Universal Century. In ordinary terms it means ‘A Century for everyone’. The age of outer space should be written as ‘Universe Century’, but we deliberately used the word ‘Universal’, which means ‘for all’, as the name for the new century.)

Marida’s hearing that was dulled by the anaesthesia picked up this calm but determined voice. She opened her eyes slightly, and saw the ceiling inside the ship connector.

The fluorescent panels that were lined up in intervals continued to glide by Marida’s eyes, and the slow-flowing air struck her face. She moved her slightly numb hand, realized that she was fastened down on the zero-gravity use stretcher, and gathered her sights that were focused on both left and right eyes. The men wearing white normal

suits were surrounding the stretchers, moving along the connector to somewhere else. At this point, this group of people looked like they were paramedics sending an injured sportsman, but none of them were focusing on the patient. Those faces were obviously showing strange looks as they looked forward, silently letting the lift grips pull them forward. The pistols grips on the men's waist holsters showed that they were definitely not related to any medical work in any sense.

Marida originally thought that they were conversing with each other, but that was not the case. The 'voice' she heard came from the internal wireless speakers of the helmet. *Who's the one talking? She swallowed her saliva that had some bitterness of the anaesthesia and pricked her eyes to hear this 'voice' that sounded like someone's speech. However, another person's voice "You're saying that the message came from the "Unicorn"? caused her face to twitch.*

"I'm saying this alright. The machine started to let out this signal once they made contact with the debris of "Laplace"."

"Did the Laplace Program unseal itself? How's the NT-D?"

"I don't sense any activation of the NT-D here…"

Marida turned her eyes to the source of this voice. From the back of the normal suit, she saw a man with a fat face tensing up. *They are not crew members of this "Nahel Argama". If I remember correctly, that man from Anaheim Electronics is called Alberto.* She felt her head aching somewhat as she recalled these scenes, and closed her eyes for the time being. She had not recovered completely, and the effects of the anaesthetic did not fade off completely. However, it seemed that the fastening belts on the stretchers were not secured that tightly, and she gradually clenched her fists to awaken her still sleepy body. She then widened her eyes and looked around.

From the area she could see, she saw Alberto and 3 other men who looked like his henchmen. They were probably heading to the shuttle that was linking over, and from what she heard before she fell asleep, it seemed that she would be brought to Earth together with this group of people. If she were detained in a military facility, the chances of her escaping would become even more difficult. Marida did not think that she could survive and make it all the way back to the Neo Zeon camp, but if she were injected with drugs and revealed information she should not say, she would end up putting her master and everyone else in a pinch, and she had to prevent that no matter what. She twitched her body that was in the worker normal suit, checked on her thoroughly hurting body due to her injuries, realized that she was not completely immobile, and started to observe the men's actions.

The men seemed to have swallowed the opinion of the military doctor who said that Marida would be unable to wake up for half a day, and did not pay attention to her. *Can I take down such numbers? As Marida held her breath and asked herself, "What should we do? Do we delay the launch and hear out the outcome of the investigations?" a subordinate asked, and Alberto's back shuddered as he held onto the lift grip.*

"Continue to keep contact with the bridge. Call the captain of the "Klimt" and tell him and we may change our departure time according to how things develop."

"Yes." The subordinate answered as he stepped on the floor and moved back Alberto, who muttered, "What kind of joke is this…" without looking at the other person. His voice echoed through the corridor, and Marida saw that he seemed to be terrified from behind as she heard that 'voice' from the broadcast inside the ship. She suddenly recalled Banagher's name and looked up at the ceiling.

It was said that this 'voice' came from the "Unicorn". *Is he called to be the pilot again?* Marida relaxed her tense body as she let her consciousness float towards that 'voice'. She closed her eyes and tried to catch the pulsation of the "Unicorn", but felt an icy feeling suddenly pierce through her chest.

She could not help but widen her eyes, and her fingers stiffened at this point. A certain presence was rising up from below the fall, passing through the normal suit and the stretcher, and she clearly felt goosebumps that rose from the skin on her back. This presence did not come from the "Unicorn", and it was not from that 'voice'. Another thing was approaching. Someone was staring at the "Nahel Argama" with killing intent.

Marida knew that this was not a term she should be saying as a prisoner, but she could not find any other term to describe this sharp 'presence'. Her body that was lying tense on the stretcher traced the certain person's presence rising from her back as she gathered her concentration that was wandering around in space, and then chose the words that formed in her heart.

The enemy's here—

Part 2[edit]

(As humans need to reside in outer space, it's important for all of humanity to unite together. We can't let this miracle… become a special occasion…)

The noise started to mix in amongst the voices, proving more than anything else that an enemy was approaching. Otto restrained his inner heart that felt horror as he loudly asked the crew, “Minovsky Particles, you say!?”

“The density is rising rapidly. It’s not an interfering wave.”

The sensor operator seated at the left console seat added on as he looked over at Otto. Minovsky Particles were detected inside the ship, and it was not scattered here from a trading ship somewhere as a precaution against pirates. Someone was definitely releasing Minovsky Particles in this area to cover the eyes of the “Nahel Argama”. *To think that we’ll end up with an enemy attack at such a time.* Otto exchanged glances with Liam and immediately asked the sensor operator, “Where’s the source?”

“Unable to confirm. The spreading pattern is still unstable. It seemed that the Minovsky radar caught interference.”

“What about the motion sensor?”

“There’s no response in the sensor range. No heat signature either.” The enemy launched an electronic battle from outside the detectable range, and the Minovsky radar failed because of the enemy. There was no room for suspicion in this current situation, and Otto used the reflexes he honed during this past week, “PREPARE FOR ANTI-AIR BATTLE!” he yelled, and the voice echoed through the bridge.

“All personnel, put on your normal suits and prepare for battle. Prepare the cannons. The enemy may be hiding amongst the surrounding civilian ships. Carry out tight anti-air surveillance. We should be able to detect the location of all the ships from the radar information.”

But even so, hundreds of ships continued to move around on the Earth’s orbit. The “Nahel Argama” could not easily pick up the enemy’s location, and it could not expect to fight a decent defensive battle while being thoroughly battered. Otto heard the repeated instructions and alarm sounds as he muttered to himself, “What kind of enemy is there…” Liam received the normal suit from the duty soldier as she coolly answered him, “I don’t think there’ll be many of them here.”

“Besides, this is the absolute defense zone of Earth. Even if the enemy’s disguised as a merchant ship, it probably won’t have the fighting strength of a fleet to invade.”

“That’s the problem. Since they’re willing to fight us with few numbers, they probably came up with some plan.”

Liam, who was putting on her normal suit, stopped what she was doing as she gave Otto a stunned reaction. Otto too felt a little troubled that he spoke with the tone of a very experienced commander as he avoided Liam in the eyes, asking, “Where are our allies location?” Liam zippered up the fastener of her normal suit as she answered,

“The patrol fleet is on duty, but they’re retreating towards the geostationary orbit. Even if we immediately ask them for aid, it’s hard to tell whether they can reach in 30 minutes.

“30 minutes… if this were an enemy raid, it’ll be over by the time they arrive.”

Doesn’t matter what the result is now. Otto added on in his heart as he too received the normal suit and turned to Mihiro at the communication operator seat, saying, “Call back the scouting scout.”

“Once they return, call Romeo 010 and 012 to cover the mothership. The ECOAS’ “Loto” probably can be used as cannons, so do tell them as well.”

“Yes… then, what about the “Unicorn”?”

Mihiro put on her helmet, returned to her seat and gave a meek expression at Otto. From an objective viewpoint, the “Unicorn” would clearly be the most powerful fighting force the ship had. Otto felt words that were stuck in his throat, and he pulled up the fastener of the normal suit in one go, “Tell him to remain on standby inside the colony.” He answered while avoiding the other party’s stare.

“That mobile suit is still releasing that ridiculous speech. Hurry up and let it retreat back inside before it becomes a live target for the enemy.”

We can’t let the kid help in this battle anymore. “Roger that”, Otto saw Mihiro answer “Roger” as she turned her face back to the console, and he looked back onto the screen in front before remorse rose in him. The debris of “Laplace” was ferrying the “Unicorn” over the Southern Hemisphere of Earth, and for every second passed, it would pull away from the “Nahel Argama” that was located on the equator. The electric noise that was mixed in with the speech seemed to be leaving together with the old Prime Minister residence.

Less than 100 years ago, the voice of the first Prime Minister of the Federation government was released all over the world. Ignoring what kind of relation this speech actually had with the “Laplace Box”, these would definitely be difficult to listen to at this point when times had changed. *Unknown world, brand new century, humanity that managed to create a united government called the Earth Federation—* Otto

continued to digest on those words, and he heard someone say, “How ironic” before it was overwhelmed by the loud sound of the alarms.

“A glorious outcome created when all of humanity is united… we, who’re living under such a result, are still killing each other.”

Liam’s voice sounded ever so vicious, and Otto had no reply for her as he put on the helmet of his normal suit without saying anything. The voice that announced the start of the Universal Century did not stop completely as it continued to remain beneath the noise and rang through the wireless radio.

Part 3[edit]

(We must normalize that fact that humanity has united, not rejecting each other, not hating each other, and become one race as we head to a wider universe. The term Universal Century includes our hopes.)

The beating of the heart was responding to the ‘voice’ of the ghost. Was it his own heartbeat, or was it the “Unicorn”? Or was it neither, but the beating from the universe itself as the owner of the ‘voice’ merged into it…?

Banagher could not understand. However, he felt that there was another him deep within that he did not know of, responding to the ‘voice’. He understood that the body that was becoming one with the machine was pulsating, and the thoughts within him were radiating out in all directions. *Right, the Universal Century was supposed to be a Century full of possibilities*—Banagher’s pulsating thoughts muttered as he started to listen to the voice that was coming out from within him.

That kind of possibility could allow humanity to ascend as a higher form of existence in the next phase. The owner of this ‘voice’ knew how much blood humanity shed for this path, and had to leave his own prayer to the next generation even though they did not know what kind of possibilities awaited them at all.

“It’s because we don’t understand that we draw it out, and then we ponder on it. Humans are the only ones granted with such an ability.”

The large tapestry appeared in space, and the gathering shadows seemed to form the silhouette of Cardeas. It was one of the six tapestries hung in the Vist residence, the piece called the ‘tent’. A lady was in front of the tent that had the words ‘my only wish’ on it and, and put her ornament into the “Box” the servant girl was holding. A lion and a unicorn were on both sides, looking like they were ready to guide the lady into the tent—

“There’s a certain sense the five senses can’t comprehend…and it exceeds the senses we have now…maybe that is the existence they called God, or maybe that is an illusion created by humanity’s wishes. But if we believe in that existence and can do what the world does, there is a chance to turn it into reality.”

A glow was radiating from the tent, and the unicorn that was floating gradually in space surrounded the “Unicorn”. As many people believed in its existence and loved it, this legendary beast was born. Humans could tame this beast, and as for whether it really existed, it already did not matter—this prose of an old poem passed through Banagher’s thoughts.

“Whether it’s right or not isn’t important. To them, this light is important. They needed something to fight despair and live in this world that was cruel and binding. They needed something to believe that this world still has room for change.”

The silhouette then took the form of Marida as she looked up at the man crucified on the Cross, saying that. They put their hopes into the future… as a prayer to make up for their sins in the past, and to comfort themselves at that this point. Perhaps they, the people who were determined to migrate into space, were most probably hurt, and were the ones who were forced to despair. This emotional state caused them to create this arrogant god called the Federation, and they left their directions to this god. That was why these people had to complain that there was no hope that existed, and passed on the possibility to the next generation. It was just like what Cardeas did, and that certain person who got the “Box” 100 years ago.”

“In the past, Zeon Deikun once said that only those people who came to space could head for innovation. This meant that humanity got used to its environment and evolved…Newtypes. To the bureaucrats who sending the leftover population to space and remained on Earth, this thinking itself basically toppled their standpoint. That’s why they suppressed Zeonism and Side 3 that was promoting it.”

The silhouette swayed again, becoming Full Frontal’s mask in space. The cold voice that described reality echoed in Banagher’s thoughts.

“The Zeon Republic had such a crime, and after a year’s war, it fell defeated. However, this helped the Federation’s call, causing the Earth Central Administration to expand every day. To break the shackle of the Federation, to fulfill self-autonomy for Spacenoids, we should—“

Banagher could understand these words, and he too felt that this was correct. *But is there a certain something that is lacking?* he felt a sense

of anxiety, and he felt that the more someone insisted on it, the more likely it would be to be distant from possibilities. But what was this feeling, the feeling of the head smashing itself against the wall? Why was it that this voice that deemed prayers as merely prayers, and possibilities as possibilities forever, felt so cold?

Whether it actually existed, that's not the issue here. There are cases of trust being nurtured and affecting reality. The Unicorn, the beast of possibilities; me, and us, we're all waiting for something in the future. I want to see the future the owner of this 'voice' says as we carry the possibilities of humanity heading into the future—

THUMP. THBUMP. THUMP. The scattered memories and the excerpts of words let out a pulsating feeling, gradually connecting the nerves that were not connected. A certain something sleeping in the "Unicorn" sensed this connection, and the glow of the Psycoframe was emitted out from the gaps between the armor. THUMP, THUMP…a forceful and rhythmic beating felt like blood flowing through the human body. It felt like the body temperature that was granted knowledge and blood increased, and the heat felt like it was expanding to the endless time and space…

At that moment.

There was an icy co0ld and sharp 'presence' growing inside this time and space, and the pulsating sound dissipated. Banagher widened his eyes and saw the all-view monitor visuals in his sights of reality.

There was a 'presence' pressurizing the body and mind, gathering gradually on the other end of the dilapidated debris, on the horizontal contour on the Earth. It was a 'presence' approaching from the darkness, a 'presence' that appeared to hurt others. Banagher's body detected this as it moved on its own, and he held onto the control stick again. The originally still "Unicorn" lifted its head at this moment, and the bladed antenna suddenly rose up. The glow from the Psycoframe that was rising between the gaps scattered, and the white machine moved around amidst the debris.

(I don't belong to any religion, but I'm not an atheist. I believe that a healthy representation of the human spirit would be to ascend to a higher plane, to give laws to ourselves, as we set higher bars for ourselves.)

With lightning-quick reflexes, Banagher moved his limbs and immediately held onto the control stick while stepping on the pedal. The main thrusters on the back and legs let out flares together, and the "Unicorn" that suddenly started to advance dashed out of the debris of

“Laplace”. The G-force that came right from the front caused Daguza to lower his head, and he was pressed down on the assistance seat without having the time to ready himself.

“Banagher…!?”

“Something’s coming over. It’s targeting the “Nahel Argama”.”

Banagher left these words behind and turned his face forward without hesitation. Daguza inspected the display board and quickly scanned through all the meters. The “Unicorn” let out thruster flares in the opposite direction of where “Laplace” was headed, and immediately negated the orbital speed. It then accelerated at a height near the atmosphere as it gradually pushed itself such that it would return back to the equatorial orbit. This was a reckless action that completely relied on the great power of the thrusters, but in another sense, this was a clever action done with ample knowledge of the machine’s capaibilities.

There were no alert signs on the screen, and all systems were normal. Until this point, the speech of the First Prime Minister had not stopped, and the signal from the wireless communicator continued to persist on. However, there was nothing to suspect whether the pilot was conscious or not.

“…Are you alright?” Daguza looked over at Banagher’s face. There was no response of any machine on the radar, and the space on the all-view monitor was dead silent. “I don’t know. We might not make it in time.” Banagher answered as he continued to stare at the space where the “Nahel Argama” should be at.

“That’s not what I’m saying here. I’m asking about your body condition. Did you just…”

Just lose your consciousness? No, did you consciousness fly out there once? Daguza could not find any term that could describe this as he turned his speechless face away from Banagher. Soon after the speech started to play, Banagher looked like his soul was taken, and he did not respond at all. Also, the glow from the psycoframe started to fill the cockpit, and the machine that activated the NT-D still showed signs of ‘transforming’ despite there not being any enemies on the radar. It felt like it sensed the anomaly on Banagher and created a resonance.

Did the psycoframe on the machine react to the pilot? Or did the psycowaves of the pilot activate the system? Either way, the NT-D was silent at this point, and the “Unicorn” continued to glide under low orbit

in its unicorn form. Daguza bit his lips and looked back at the debris of Laplace, (bridge to all mobile squad), Mihiro's voice could be heard.

(Abandon the current mission immediately and return to the mothership. We have detected Minovsky particles now. There's a very likely chance that its scattered to disrupt the enemy. I repeat…)

Daguza turned his face forward in surprise. The radar screen that was linked to the navigation control satellite had noise all over it, indicating the fact that the electronic waves caught interference. The noise from the wireless radio got worse and worse, and the voices of Conroy and the rest yelling something seemed so distant. The laser communication from the "Nahel Argama" still remained, but the reception from the other channels decreased. The effective radius of all the sensors were limited by the interference of the Minovsky Particles.

Everything was still normal several seconds ago. Did this guy detect the enemy's presence before the Minovsky Particles were scattered? Daguza felt a shiver as he looked at the side of Banagher's face. His heart then jumped hard the moment he heard the shout, "THEY'RE HERE…!"

Banagher continued to look in front without looking aside as he narrowed his eyes and gave a killing intent. *At the distance out of the sensor radius range, the "Nahel Argama" can determine where the enemy was from the laser signals, but this guy seems like he can detect the enemies further than that.* "How many can you sense?" Daguza asked in a half-believing manner, and Banagher answered him without looking back, "There's one…no, that's not it. There's another independent squad hiding behind it."

"Behind…?"

At this point, Daguza was really stunned. He knew that it was useless, but he still looked over at where Banagher was staring at. He stared at the dark blue space that was CG drawn, and he again felt an ominous feeling before looking back at the side of that face seated beside him.

It was said that Newtypes could detect an enemy's presence through the mobile suit armor and fight while predicting each other's movements. Daguza had no intention of doubting if a sixth sense really existed, and he had personally experienced the threat of psycommu weapons, but he had no idea whether such monstrous-like humans really existed. He wanted to cast proof to deny it, but he could not do it. He turned around and saw a pink beam flying through the darkness.

A beam came flying in from the space behind the “Nahel Argama” that was moving around the equatorial orbit, and it grazed past the “Unicorn” before being sucked in by Earth that was showing its night appearance. It was the glow of the mega-particle cannon…but it was not sniping at the “Nahel Argama”. The enemy sublight shots came flying one after another as they aimed for the debris of “Laplace” moving on the axis orbit. To be accurately, the enemy was sniping from long distance, outside the range of the sensor, at the “Nahel Argama” mobile suit squad stopped there.

Even if the enemy did not know where the mobile suits were, it was possible to predict the location of the “Laplace” debris that was maintaining a steady speed. Thus, it was not difficult to shoot at the debris. It was merely 10 seconds since the moment the retreat order was given, so Conroy and the rest should still be hovering in the debris, planning how to change their trajectory. “They’re aiming for the mobile suit squad…do they intend to isolate the “Nahel Argama?” Daguza mused as he looked at Banagher’s face. He, who sensed the enemy’s location first, looked right in front this time as he did not move. Even the beams that glided past him did not cause him to show signs of fears.

If he was a step slower in changing the course, the “Unicorn” will be affected by this long-range snipe and end up tangled amongst the debris of “Laplace”. *As I guessed, this guy can see something I can’t see.* There was no room for doubt anymore as Daguza looked over at where the beams came flying in from. He could not detect the enemy’s presence, and he felt his own anxiousness as he even thought of cursing out at this speech that continued to play.

Part 4[edit]

(During the Anno Domini Era, these Holy Scriptures were spread from man to man. Even without mentioning the Ten Commandments of Moses, every religion teaches doctrines on how people should live and face the Earth. These weren’t viewed as human words, but rather as a contract with God.)

The beam launcher shot had its power suppressed and the charge time set to the minimum as it looked like a slender and sharp claw that was about to scratch the night face of Earth. As the trail scattered, another beam came flying by, drawing scratches on the place where the “Laplace” debris was. It was not easy to hit, but for the mobile suit squad that was scattered around the debris, this kind of attack was enough to cause a threat.

Gilboa's squad did manage to stop the enemy in their tracks. Gael Chan felt that he would not meet any resistance any further, checked on the laser link with the "Garencieres", and his lips curled up.

"I never thought I'll have Zeon covering me…"

And I'm attacking a Federation ship of all opponents. Gael felt that it was really odd as he stared at the ship body of the "Nahel Argama" on the enlarged window. As the estimate marker and the CG visuals overlapped each other, it was still possible to detect the shape of the ship even if the machine was outside the sensor rang. The "Nahel Argama", which lost its portside catapult, floated on the space above the equator, and looked like a sphinx with a missing left foreleg. It was a mobile suit mothership that was very similar to the "White Base" of the past. As he stared at this white ship body that could not even fire any anti-air fire, Gael checked on whether the Minovsky radar was working, and then cautiously suppressed the speed o the "Eye-Zack". As he slowed down, the machine descended, and the "Eye-Zack" that got onto the rendezvous orbit approached the "Nahel Argama" as every second, every minute passed.

In space, where there were no conductive substances, it was possible to guess the source of the Minovsky Particles through the diffusion thickness and the spread. The device in charge of this would be the Minovsky radar. With that, it was possible to detect the enemy's location amidst the Minovsky Particle wave and prevent pre-emptive attacks. However, electronic related methods could nullify the electronic equipment, and this "Eye-Zack" that was enhanced in electronic warfare was equipped with such functions. Currently, the Minovsky radar on the "Nahel Argama" was confused by the irregular spread, and even the "Garencieres" could not grasp its position. Gael would use this opening and close in to a minimum distance where the optical sensors could not detect, and take action in one go. The "Eye-Zack" was obviously inferior in terms of mobility and generator output as compared to the current mobile suits, but it would only take an instant to determine the winner if it were a distance when both sides could see each other. He just had to approach the enemy first without the enemy noticing him.

"I don't have any grudges with you…but I still have to repay this debt."

With the night of Earth as the background, the footage showed the white ship that was a pin size at best. Gael touched the Firearms Control System panel and readied the live ammunition weapon that was commonly called the modified Zaku machine gun at a position to shoot. Once he shoots, his position would be detected by the enemy,

so he chose not to concentrate his fire. As he was about to squeeze the trigger, the battle sequence program started to count down in seconds. Suddenly, he saw the all-view monitor in front of him dyed completely white, and two tremors shook the cockpit as the machine rattled and cried.

“What’s going on…?”

The scattered particles of the beam hit the exterior armor of the “Eye-Zack”, causing the cockpit to let out noises sounding like it was hit by pebbles. Gael adjusted the machine and pointed the gun at where the beams were flying from. They were not cannon shots from the “Nahel Argama”. An enemy was firing high powered beams from another direction. The “Eye-Zack” rolled its monoeye unhurriedly, and as the sensors caught sight of a machine moving over from the Earth at its feet, the message ‘data match’ was shown and enlarged on the screen together with the CG-corrected enemy visual.

“The “Unicorn”…!?”

The pure white mobile suit, which had the unique trait of the lone horn, wielded its customized beam rifle that was loaded with magnum cartridges as it came crashing in from below. Gael squeezed the trigger on reflex and carried out evasive maneuvers, and the modified Zaku machine gun let out a trail of fire. For every five shots, there was a tracer round inside, and the tracer round let out a light yellow trail. The “Unicorn” looked like it was ready for this attack as it dodged and fired the beam rifle again. The mega-particle cannon that was greatly different from the normal rifles, and a torrent of light rain down on the “Eye-Zack” less than 3km away. The storm of scattered particles again concentrated its fire on the “Eye-Zack”, and right at the moment, the damage report window appeared on the monitor.

The extremely hot particles caused the armor to be poked with holes, and the field monitor for the right knee joint indicated that it could not be recovered. *The enemy should be suppressed at this point by the sniping, so why is it that it can get all the way here?* Gael checked on the current situation of the “Eye-Zack” that had its mobility reduced by half, and he bit his lips and glared at the lone horned mobile suit in front to him.

He knew about the overwhelming mobility and the power of the armaments as he took part in the development beforehand. To the “Unicorn”, this old generation mobile suit that was very slow in its movements was no different from a scarecrow. *I’ll be slaughtered when the next shot comes in,* Gael had no doubt about this prediction as he got mentally prepared to prepare for the third shot. However, the

“Unicorn” continued to face the “Eye-Zack” as it did not shoot a beam.

The white machine had the ideal line of fire to catch the enemy, but it lowered its beam rifle somewhat hesitantly. This action was basically a free chance given to the enemy to run away, and it was definitely impossible for the person sitting inside that cockpit to be a normal pilot. *Is the one sitting inside that person?* Gael instinctively thought as he felt a burning feeling in his head, and squeezed the trigger of the machine gun fully.

The large empty cartridge was ejected, and the 120mm bullets that were fired let loose a tail of light at the “Unicorn”. The “Unicorn” dodged this attack by adjusting its height, but it did not intend to fight back. The machine, which lost its killing intent, continued to dodge while not wasting its movement, and got in the way of the “Eye-Zack”, only caring about harassing the enemy as it did not let the enemy charge at the mothership. Gael could have broken through if he wanted to—but he was facing an opponent he could not ignore. He understood that he had to do something he did not expect, a foolish act that could ruin the entire plan, but he still used the left arm of the “Eye-Zack” to draw out a beam saber.

Not caring that the machine would leave the rendezvous course, Gael lit the thrusters to slow the “Eye-Zack” down. The machine that was affected by gravity started to descend, and it closed in on the “Unicorn”. At that moment, Gael used the chance to swing the beam saber down at the “Eye-Zack”.

The “Unicorn” grabbed the grip from the pack on the rear side of the arm, and drew its beam saber. Both sides’ beam sabers clashed, creating sparks that lit the place. Gael tried to steady the machine that nearly got knocked aside and used all his strength to yell, “BANAGHER LINKS!”

“WHAT KIND OF FIGHTING IS THIS!? SHOOT DOWN THE ENEMY WHEN YOU CAN DO SO! YOU CAN’T SURVIVE LIKE THIS!”

(What…?) The doubtful voice echoed through the wireless communicator. *No problems here.* Gael vaguely heard the change of era speech from the first Prime Minister too. *It seems that the Laplace Program is successfully acting out the original process as planned.* Gael confirmed this and felt a certain unexpected sense of realism, and he continued to yell at Banagher, “YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO DO!”

“YOU HAVE TO FIND THE REAL IDENTITY OF THE “BOX” AND FIND A BETTER WAY TO USE IT. THAT’S THE WILL YOUR

FATHER LEFT FOR YOU TO DO WHEN HE LEFT THE “UNICORN” TO YOU!”

(What are you saying!? Who exactly are you!?)

“It doesn’t matter who I am! You must continue to live on and carry on the will of your father. I can tell that you have the ability to do this!!”

If that’s not the case, the “Unicorn” would not have left the “Laplace” debris at this timing and get in my way. This is what the heavens planned—everything is right at where they should be just as planned. Gael felt amazed by this in less than a second, let the “Eye-Zack” sweep aside the “Unicorn” that only knew how to swing the beam saber with brute force and get by its opponent. (Wait!) Banagher yelled, and the voice of the First Prime Minister’s speech faded away.

He tossed out the dummy balloon to hold off the opponent, and let the machine head back on course to the “Nahel Argama”. *It doesn’t matter if I’m shot from behind now.* He believed that he had someone to believe in in the future, and that he should continue to live in shame forever. This thought he did not have several seconds ago caused him to give a wry smile, and he tried to drag the “Eye-Zack” that was on the brink of death away by exerting the throttle.

“I hope you will not abandon your life. Continue to live on Banagher Links. For your father’s sake.”

Gael muttered to himself as he rode on the “Eye-Zack” that lit its thrusters. The “Nahel Argama” fired its intercepting fire, and the “Eye-Zack” machine rushed in on the fire trails with reckless abandon.

Part 5[edit]

(And now, we’re about to say goodbye to the century of Gods and accept the time of a new contract. This time, it’s not to surpass God, but to communicate with the God inside us, as we move up to a higher plane. The contract of the Universal Century should be born of all of humanity’s consciousness.)

The “Unicorn” used its beam saber to slice apart the dummy balloon that was expanded to the size of a mobile suit, and then aimed the reticule of the rifle at the enemy unit. Banagher squeezed the finger on the trigger lightly, and the silhouette of the enemy unit that looked like it was wearing a radome-like overlapped on where the “Nahel Argama” was. Banagher then moved his finger away from the trigger.

The position of the opponent at this point would mean that the beam would hit the “Nahel Argama”. Banagher clicked his tongue as he felt

confused by his inner heart feeling relieved that he did not have to fire. ""Nahel Argama", do you copy? Daguza's call at this point caused him to hurriedly grab onto the control stick.

"1 o'clock, Plus 47 degrees. There's an enemy unit approaching you. Hurry up and intercept it."

Daguza did not wait for the ship to reply as he casted a sharp glance at Banagher. Banagher looked away and intended to step on the pedal, 'stop', the voice caused him to stop the machine.

"If you approach now, you'll be caught in the shots from the "Nahel Argama". Go intercept the enemy behind."

Daguza sounded rather stiff. Banagher reflected on what had happened, and this kind of reaction felt reasonable to him. He stared at the "Nahel Argama" that was firing intercepting shots from the monitor, and the dummy balloons that were released continued to explode as they got shot. At this moment, the unknown enemy unit was attacking the ship alone. *For a Neo Zeon pilot, he knows too much about me. Is he someone related to the Foundation? But if that's the case, that person will not sit inside a "Sleeves" mobile suit without reason—*

"He just mentioned your father…did he?"

Daguza mused as he did not look away from the enemy unit that was passing through the concentrated fire. Banagher could not stop his shoulders from shivering.

"What's going on? You—"

The flashes looked like they came with sounds as they radiated from the monitor, overpowering the words Daguza wanted to say next. Banagher and Daguza looked over at where the flashes came from, and they saw the enemy unit surrounded by flames as it charged at the "Nahel Argama".

The machine was surrounded by numerous anti-air fire as it became a ball of fire, but it continued to move it. "A special attack…?" Daguza muttered as his face was covered by the light of the fireballs. The enemy unit that was thoroughly hit let out a chain of explosions, and blew up into bits near the battleship. The anti-glare filter could not completely prevent the strong light from filling the cockpit, and Banagher could not help but narrow his eyes.

The booster tank at the back exploded, and the enemy machine that was no longer humanoid was gradually swallowed by the lights of explosions. That heat source soon cooled off due to the vacuum, and

then became a blueish-white waste gas as the blown fragments scattered all around the “Nahel Argama”. The frame was the only thing left amongst the twisted wreckage, and there was no signs of an ejection pod being fired out. “Doing such a stupid thing…” Daguza’s voice rang together with the speech, and Banagher stared at the “Nahel Argama” that was enlarged on the window. He saw that the ship and the shuttle that was connected were fine, and felt a heavy feeling he could not shake away.

The enemies’ sniping from long range continued, and though the current situation did not allow for his heart to relax, what was with this uneasy feeling in his chest? That explosion and the scattered debris did not feel realistic. Banagher sensed the sharp ‘presence’ of that pilot that had not disappeared even till this point. He harboured this baseless belief as he turned to the space on the other end. He felt that another ‘presence’ was getting ready to launch as the long-ranged shots of beams came flying over.

Part 6[edit]

(Everyone knows that there was quite the controversy over the Prime Minister’s residence being a space station orbiting around the Earth. From a transportation and security viewpoint, this wasn’t really a good choice. However, we are about to advance into the Universal Century.)

It was possible to see that light that exploded through the main screen on the battle monitor, even if it were through the naked eye. The lights let out a sharp glow with the Earth shrouded in night as the backdrop.

“The laser signal from the guest is cut off. Near the “Mock Trojan Horse”.”

Flaste, who was seated at the steering seat, looked behind at he reported to Zinnerman. *Just as planned,* Zinnerman gave this expression as he nodded slightly, and the commanded through the microphone. “Alright, Gilboa squad, head forward.”

“The “Mock Trojan Horse” isn’t going to move fast when its attached to the shuttle. Distract them as much as you can. 20 minutes later, we’ll send the signal to retreat.”

(Roger that. We’ll look forward to the guest’s performance.)

With this response, Gilboa, who was right in front of the “Garencieres”, let the “Geara Zulu” move and removed the beam launcher and the energy unit from the backpack. It would not be suitable to bring in the power but hard to control beam launcher if he wanted to get close to

the enemy ship and distract it, and a standard armament beam rifle would be enough. The other two “Geara Zulus” units followed what Gilboa’s unit did as they let go of the beam launchers in their heads. Zinnerman saw these actions and reminded them as a commander, “Don’t force yourself there.”

“Even if we don’t count the Manhunter mobile suits as fighting strength, we can’t underestimate the new transformable mobile suits. It seems that the “Gundam” is moving faster than we expected.”

The “Unicorn” left the debris of “Laplace’ right before the attack started and even covered the “Mock Trojan Horse” directly. *Is this a mere coincidence, or did that pilot detect the attack beforehand?* Gilboa let out a meaningful voice as he said, (It seems like the opponent’s that brat with sharp instincts.)

(The brats in our house look like they like him. Shall I try to bring him along with the “Gundam” if I have the chance?)

“Don’t be greedy. We can receive the information of the Laplace Program from the Psyco Monitor. Right now, our utmost priority is to save Marida.”

Zinnerman recalled Banagher Links’ eyes in his mind as he refuted Gilboa’s suggestion. Beside him, “The Captain’s right. Your steering skills are the best when we‘re talking about steering this “Garencieres”. Don’t involve any unnecessary feelings and die off there.” Flaste interrupted, and Gilboa answered with a wry tone, (Understood)

(Gilboa Squad, launching!)

The three “Geara Zulus” lit their thrusters at the same time as they gradually moved on course to the “Mock Trojan Horse”. Zinnerman did not wait for the 3 thruster flares to vanish as he turned his sights to the “Unicorn” marker located. As things stood at this point, the unequipped “Garencieres” could not help out. After the mini mobile suits took back the beam launchers Gilboa squad threw out, what Zinnerman could do was to gain an estimate of the situation of this battle through the main screen. Even so, all the sensors were affected by the Minovsky Particles, so he could only look at the allied machines’ laser signals to guess what was going on afar. There was nothing else that could cause detriment to the mind more easily than this, but they could still detect the movements of the “Unicorn” through the psyco monitor, and this was a solace that was better than nothing.

The information that could be sent from the psyco monitor did not just include the location of the “Unicorn”. Since just now, Zinnerman had

been listening to the speech that had been playing through the bridge. The voice of the First Prime Minister of the Federation government could be heard in this speech which started since midnight—and the "Garencieres" could hear every signal the "Unicorn" released through the psyco monitor. The NT-D was not activated, but the psyco monitor could trace the actions of the 'Unicorn", and it definitely reacted to this voice.

The transmitting wave used by the monitor could cause the Minovsky Particles to vibrate. Thus, even if it was more than 1000km away, this 'voice' could still be heard clearly. However, it may not be a good thing to hear it, and Flaste commented, "Sounds really grim". Zinnerman did not argue back as he turned his bitter expression at the steering seat.

"It's good that it can tell us the position, but this just sounds annoying no matter how I listen to it. Is it not going to end until the speech is over?"

"There is a reaction from the psyco monitor, so it shows that the Laplace Program is still functioning, but…"

As the answer came, Zinnerman saw the psyco monitor on the main screen. What was indicated on it was the merely an audio data being received, and there were no signs of the Laplace Program releasing any other information. Zinnerman intended to stroke the beard under his chin, but his fingers hit the helmet of his normal suit. He snorted out some air and sat back into the captain seat. He heard of this change of eras speech several times in school and in the news, but he never heard the contents so seriously. "Are we to analyse this audio data?" Flaste asked, "I don't know." And Zinnerman answered as he shook his head slightly, wanting to shake off these words that were full of implications out of his mind.

"We haven't detected the signal of the NT-D being activated. Maybe there is some hidden message once the speech is over—"

"We got a laser signal!" One of the crew reported, covering what Zinnerman was about to say. Flaste immediately sat upright in his chair and asked, "Is it from the "Rewloola"?", while Zinnerman looked over at the back of the crew member's head as he sat on the navigation seat.

"No, that's not it. This signal is…"

The crew member's stammering voice caused Zinnerman to feel a chill up his back. The time at this point was 00.12, and it was earlier than expected by 30 minutes. However, there was no other person who

would contact the ship at this moment. Zinnerman left Flaste to respond while he stared at the main screen. In this wide and endless darkness, there was a defiant pressure entering this incomprehensible battlefield—

“So Full Frontal has appeared, huh…”

Part 7[edit]

(I feel that there are some differences between Earth and Outer Space that I have to personally experience. Thus I used the authority of the Prime Minister to make this decision. And there is no better stage to change the calendar on the last day of Anno Domini and to start the Universal Century than this space station.)

After firing the wire gun at the scalding hot external armor, the reel was activated. He took note not to let the protruding metal frame touch the normal suit, and as long as he could climb onto the internal armor that was poking out, the first phase of the plan would be considered a success.

“I really want to say that this is easy…but the rest is up to luck.”

Gael muttered to himself as he landed on the deck of the “Nahel Argama”. The battle before this created a large broken opening on the catapult deck that was 30m large and more than 5m tall. The frame that was twisted by the burnt armor was not cleaned up, no one bothered to deal with it, and it was a devastating scene akin to the aftermath of a fire. The block Gael climbed was a service route that had the middle exposed amidst this breakage. After walking inside for approximately 10m, he could see an emergency partition wall that was used to separate the inside of the ship from the absolute zero of space.

Everything was going just as Gael predicted. He had a ship layout map obtained from Anaheim Corporation and photos taken by Neo Zeon, and after comparing the two data, he had a rough grasp of the damage situation. Gael got out before the “Eye-Zack” got shot down when he charged right into the anti-air intercepting fire, and he used the portable vernier land mover to climb onto the “Nahel Argama”. This action itself would completely rely on timing, and the reason why Gael was willing to execute this reckless plan was because he saw the opening on the catapult deck. It was the easiest path to enter. He forcefully kicked the melted metal frame and let his body lean at the wall. He used his hand to wave aside the black ash that was on the surface and installed the high powered explosives SHMX he had on his waist onto the partition wall. He stuffed this wired ignition device,

retreated to the wall and waited for the most suitable moment to press the ignition switch.

Soon after, there was another trail of beams outside the fault, and the anti-air fire that went quiet suddenly lit up again. Gilboa's squad was starting to create a distraction. Gael leaned his back on the wall, and he saw the crossfire through the helmet visor. The shots grazed past the hull of the ship, rocking it, and Gael used the moment the tremors reached his back to press the ignition switch.

The explosives installed inside the partition wall exploded silently, and there was a hole that was approximately a meter in diameter. The fragments of debris that exploded flew out towards the vacuum, and the air inside the ship rushed out of the wall. The steam that was condensed due to the sudden quick decompression created a layer of mist on the service route. Gael used the metal frame as a pivot and brought his body to the hole before firing the wire gun inside. The reel immediately started to activate, and Gael managed to duck into the hole past the air that was rushing out at him. He let his feet land on the floor and step deep within the service route. The air roared over the helmet, stimulating the eardrums that were already used to the silent space.

The emergency partition steel wall started to activate once it sensed the decrease in pressure, sealing the path. Gael forced himself to keep his eyes open as he continued to kick the wall. The partition wall the descended from the ceiling blocked his sights, and he saw that the gap between the wall and the floor was becoming narrow. *Will I be locked here? Or will I be crushed by the wall?* Gael used all his strength to kick the wall and curl up—and then, he felt the sound of the partition wall sealing up with his body.

The winds that were surrounding him suddenly stopped, and the wire gun ceased to curl up at this point. Gael opened his eyes that were shut unknowingly and looked around. The gloomy red color of the emergency lights was all around, and the path leading to the middle of the battleship was right in front of him. The partition wall that was closed up was right behind him, and the barometer installed on the arm of the normal suit was pointing at one. *So I succeeded?* Gael heaved a sigh of relief as he opened the helmet visor, deciding to wipe his entire face that was covered with sweat.

There were damages on the partition walls the moment the enemy raid came, and new partition walls sealed the place in response. Most likely, the crew of the ship would think this was caused by the direct hit of the enemies' shots, but they could not have expected for everything

to be planned by an intruder. Gael experienced the tremors of the continued battle with his body as he remembered the map of the ship in his mind. He then kicked the floor and moved towards the nearest locker room.

If he were slow, he would end up meeting the emergency response team, and this would be bad for him, especially as he was still wearing a Neo Zeon pilot suit. Gael did not bother himself too much with the alerts that rang through the corridors and switched the wireless radio to the frequency Federation ships used. During battle, the wireless communicator inside the ship would be kept opened, and if he could receive these signals, he could get a rough grasp of the situation.

(Focus your fire on top! If the enemy's in low orbit, they can't turn back easily. You can definitely hit them if you aim carefully!)

(The connected shuttle is getting in our ship's way! The 17th to 21st Close-In Weapons System can't be used. Can't we think of anything here!?)

("Klimt" calling the "Nahel Argama". We can't re-enter the atmosphere like this! Our ship will delay launch. We hope for the crew and the guests to evacuate inside the ship.)

("Klimt", our ship will allow your crew to evacuate into the ship. We might have to abandon your ship based on the situation. Please hurry with your retreat)

To the soldiers who lived in the Minovsky era, it was their job to determine which were necessary information amongst the dialogues that were exchanged through the wireless communicator. It seemed that the guests that boarded the "Klimt" once would head back inside the "Nahel Argama". It would take him 5 minutes to put on a Federation normal suit, and it would take another 5 minutes for him to head to the connector shaft with the "Klimt". He promised with Zinnerman 20 minutes grace, and he was planning whether he could catch at least one of Martha's subordinates and bring that prisoner called Marida Cruz back. Having checked that 3 minutes passed on the watch, Gael flew through the maze-complicated large passageways as if he was gliding. (WHAT'S THE "GUNDAM" DOING!? HURRY UP AND TELL IT TO FIGHT IF IT'S LAUNCHED!) A certain person's growl echoed through the wireless communicator, and Gael felt that his body that was rushing under zero gravity became even heavier.

Part 8[edit]

(Today, there are more than 100 representatives from different countries in the Earth Federation. After some discussion, we shall sign the charter of the Universal Century. This Charter shall be known as the Laplace Charter, and it shall act as a contract between Humanity and the World.)

The “Unicorn” drew the barrel out from its back attachments and set the magazine in it. The assisting grip on the side in front extended together with the barrel, and the hyper bazooka was ready to fire.

The “Unicorn” put the beam rifle onto its back, and raised the barrel of the hyper bazooka that was about as tall as itself over the shoulder, ready to fire. The 3 “Geara Zulus” quickly dodged and went right at the “Nahel Argama” at the back. Banagher caught sight of one enemy unit flying over him on the reticule, held his breath and squeezed the trigger. The propulsion gunpowder that was used for firing exploded inside the barrel, and the 380mm shot took this momentum as it came flying out of the nozzle. The heat and wind pressure that was released from the smoke evacuator caused a thick trail of gas to scatter around.

The 380mm shell continued to spin as it flew in a straight line, dragging a trail of thin smoke as it grazed past the accelerating “Geara Zulu”. The proximity fuse activated at the same time, causing hundreds of metal balls to fly out from the exploded shell. The large number of balls that were 5mm in diameter scattered out, and the “Geara Zulu” legs took direct damage as it got knocked off course greatly, but it did not take fatal damage. Banagher immediately stepped on the pedal to let the “Unicorn” rise. The beam that came flying in grazed past the “Unicorn”s legs, and the machine gun-like beams came ripping over.

The other two mobile suits caught up to the “Nahel Argama”, moving through the intercepting fire as they let loose a rain of beam bullets onto the ship. The enemy units accelerated, got above the ship, and after seeing that they hit, decelerated immediately and pull away from the firing range below them. The increase and decrease in speeds would show the difference in heights, and they were executing a hit and run tactic that could only be executed in low orbit. In contrast, the two “Lotos” that were equipped onto the battleship were tactless. The anti-air machine guns and the 4 Gatling cannons that were equipped on their shoulders respectively fired, but only added some empty lights amidst the lines of fire. On the other hand, the two “ReZELs” that were protecting the ship from above and below fought back with beam rifles, but even they looked to be having a tough go in this battle that was different from an ordinary space battle. The allied mobile suits movements were not sharp enough as they had to concentrate on maintaining orbital speed. In contrast, the enemy forces that could only

snuggle around the mothership continued to fight using an irregular rhythm as they continued to carry out hit and run attacks. It was because the enemy was overwhelmingly familiar with fighting in low orbit.

The bridge did command the “Unicorn” to return, but in this current situation, it could not do so. Banagher’s consciousness was mostly distracted by the speedometer and height meter, but he continued to fire a second hyper bazooka shot. The scattered shots exploded around the enemy unit’s head that was lowered greatly, creating sparks in the armor. But that was not enough to cause a fatal hit.

The “Geara Zulu” descended again and accelerated as it fought back with the beam rifle. Banagher dodged as he closed in on the enemy with the 3 hyper bazooka rounds. He determined the attacking route of the enemy, and as he aimed the reticule slightly below the target, “It’s disadvantageous for you to attack a moving enemy with a bazooka.” Daguza’s voice rang in his ears.

“You should use the beam magnum. At this distance…”

“No. That’s too powe3rful.”

A mere graze from a beam magnum shot can melt a mobile suit’s armor into nothing, and even trigger an explosion—even if I don’t use this weapon, I can still force the enemy to retreat. “This is not a time to hold back, you know!?” but Banagher ignored Daguza’s growl as he let the machine stop immediately.

The machine descended drastically, and the relative distance with the enemy unit was pulled closer. “You’ll fall!” Daguza shouted, and Banagher accelerated at a height of 200km and got around the feet of the “Geara Zulu” that passed by. The 4 thrusters on its back lit up at the same time, and the “Unicorn” rose quickly as it pursued the enemy unit from below.

“If it’s a close-ranged battle…!”

Banagher deliberately turned the reticule away and fired the hyper bazooka. The shell grazed past the “Geara Zulu”, exploded 2km away, and the metal balls that came flying out rained on the thick green machine. The “Geara Zulu” took more than a hundred metal balls from the front as it lost its balance, and the beam rifle in its right hand dropped off. The beam rifle seemed to have taken damage from the direct hits of the metal balls as it exploded immediately, creating an orange ring of light in space.

With the light of the explosion shining, the “Geara Zulu” shot its

balance verniers as it slowly retreated. The generator was not damaged, and it probably would not be dragged down to Earth by gravity. After confirming this, Banagher scanned around to look for the other two mobile suits. At this moment, Daguza gave a deep voice from behind as he said, “You deliberately missed that, didn’t you…”

“If we force them to retreat, there’s no need to kill them, right?”

“They’ll end up being reclaimed by the mothership if you do that, and they’ll become enemies with us again.”

“I’ll just force them to retreat again when that time comes.”

Banagher said without looking at the other person. “Do you think this is a game, you bastard!?” the angry growl rang through Banagher’s ears, and his body that was grabbed on the shoulder was held down onto the linear seat. Banagher bit his lips, unwilling to meet Daguza in the eyes.

“I don’t want to repeat what that man just said, but you should take the enemy down when you go. The enemies you let go may end up being the ones killing our allies, or even you.”

The shoulder that was grabbed by the other man cooled off, and the clever reality spread through Banagher’s body. If he admitted this, he would be swallowed by the machine, and would become a living core of negative emotions ready to explosive. He thought about the thoroughly injured Marida, and the certain person whose name he did not know that got shot and killed by a stray shot—and had enough of this. “SINCE WHEN AM I PLAYING HERE!?” he squeezed out this voice from his abdomen and waved away Daguza’s hand on his shoulder.

“WHETHER IT’S MY DEATH, OR THE DEATH OF OTHERS, I CAN’T JUST JOKE AROUND HERE. THAT’S WHY I’M TRYING MY BEST HERE, ALRIGHT!?”

Daguza met Banagher’s stare right in the eyes, and he showed a wavering expression as his eyelids shivered. Banagher finished and looked away, only to hear an approaching alarm of an unknown clinging tightly onto his heart.

The motion sensor indicated that there was an enemy approaching from above, on the right side. The relative distance was less than 20km, and it was too late to dodge it. Banagher let the “Unicorn” draw its beam saber and got ready to take on the enemy mobile suit that was approaching rapidly. He caught sight of the enemy that was a little dot, and this enemy soon became the size of a fist. The “Geara Zulu”

that was wielding the beam rifle then covered Banagher's sights.

The beam hook that was shaped in a light sickle swung down, and the beam saber took this hit as bright sparks were emitted. As the high-heat particles cackled, Banagher saw the antenna of the enemy unit that had a feather-like decoration, (Can you hear me, Banagher?) this voice caused him to widen his eyes in shock.

(Fall back. I have no intention of fighting with you here.)

"Mr Gilboa…!?)

The savage looking face of the "Geara Zulu" that was lighting its monoeye overlapped with the dark-skinned face Banagher faced on "Palau", and the fingertip pressing onto the button of the beam saber was shuddering. As Daguza gasped beside him, (We won't sink the ship. Retreat back before things end!) Gilboa continued.

(Our aim is to bring Marida back. The "Garencieres" is nearby for this."

"But that…what do you intend to do!?"

(Everything's set.) The "Geara Zulu" continued to clash with the "Unicorn" at close range as it turned its monoeye around to check if there were anyone else on board, before finally looking back at Banagher. (Listen, you must retreat. Tikva will be sad if you die.)

After saying that quickly, the "Geara Zulu" pulled back the vibrating beam hook away from the "Unicorn". "Wait, Mr Gilboa…!" Banagher shouted, but the other person did not respond, as what was left in Banagher's sights was the back of Gilboa's unit that lit its verniers as it left. The "Nahel Argama" continued to let out intercepting fire as it appeared in front of the unit that merged into space. Banagher did not have time to think too much as he stepped on the pedal, hurrying the "Unicorn" to where the other person was.

"Did he say that they set everything up…?"

Daguza mused amidst the accelerating G-force, but at this point, Banagher did not have the need to meet the passenger behind him in the eyes as he was thinking the same thing as what Daguza was thinking. The enemy unit that struggled to attack the "Nahel Argama" let itself get shot into pieces deliberately, and a certain perpetrator used that opening to sneak inside the ship. "RX-0 calling Romeo 010, please transfer the channel to the "Nahel Argama"." Banagher heard Daguza speak into the wireless communicator, and he let the "Unicorn" maintain an acceleration that was barely enough to leave the course as it charged right at the "Nahel Argama".

(There might be an intrusion inside the ship. The guess is that the enemy is aiming to recapture the prisoner. Strengthen security immediately, and if necessary, patrol around. Over."

At this distance, it would be more reliable to ask an allied machine to send the machine as the message would be more likely to reach the receiver. The "ReZEL" that was below the "Nahel Argama" let out a signal flare, indicating that it understood, and closed in on the distance with the ship. Banagher saw this and felt somewhat relaxed as he turned to look at the "Nahel Argama". He saw the space shuttle that was connected to the portside, confirmed that Marida was still within the ship, and suddenly had a doubt, wondering what exactly he was doing at this point.

If Zinnerman and the rest were here, it would be much better to hand Marida over to them. This was an obvious fact that did not require thinking, and it was because Gilboa believed that Banagher would have this similar understanding that he spoke of the plan for this operation. Even so, Banagher forgot about this untila moment, and he, who detected that the enemy had entered the ship, kept thinking of warning his allies to respond.

Enemies and allies—no, this kind of classification was not suitable for him. He know both sides personally, and no matter which side it was, he would help out the moment he saw someone in danger. In the end, Banagher was an observer who did not belong to either side, and could not help either side. He was so timid that he did not want to hurt others and himself, pretending to be kind, but would only add fuel to the battlefield. He was always pretending to be a victim, but killed others with random shots.

This won't do. It'll only cause the situation to get more confusing. I won't be able to save myself, let alone others, so what shall I do? Banagher could not think properly as he had all sorts of thoughts, and strength was seeping from his hands that were holding the control sticks. He shook his head and looked in front. On that side, where the fires continued to flare, Captain Otto and Lieutenant Commander Conroy were still fighting; Ensign Mihiro and Gilboa were still fighting, and even Takuya and Micott were probably fighting with fear.

Then, what about me—? As Banagher stared at the lights that were crossed in front of him, he repeated his self-questioning mindlessly, only to see the "ReZEL" approaching the "Nahel Argama" get shot down and explode.

The fireball that engulfed the blue machine immediately expanded, and the static and electronic interference noise entered the ears. Banagher

let the “Unicorn” accelerate and rise. He could tell at a thick beam of a long distance cannon snipe grazed past his feet, and the beam scattered as if it was trying to light Earth that was shrouded in night.

“A new mobile suit…!?”

Daguza muttered. Looking at the direction and power, it was not a beam that was shot by Gilboa and his men. Banagher looked over at the front of the “Nahel Argama” where the beam came flying from, and he sensed a certain pressure his body recognized closing in from there. The new enemy came entering from the equatorial orbit in a completely opposite direction from his, approaching at an alarming speed. That oppressiveness became a wind pressure that felt like it would rip the scalp off, and at this point, a term passed through his chest like a beam of light.

The Red Comet—!

Part 9[edit]

(This is based on the agreement from everyone in the Earth Federation government, and no mention of God is in it. We shall not mention Humanity’s original sin. After this, we are to face our final judgment, and then we shall break the deadlock in our hearts. Our destiny will be in our hands.)

“If God really exists, I can offer a kiss there…!!”

The ecstasy of exhilaration rose up his body as he squeezed the trigger. The beam launcher let out mega particles beams, and the pink lights grazed past the “Mock Wooden Horse” as it reached beyond. If the information sent over from the “Garencieres” psyco monitor was correct, that person should be inside. Angelo got ready to meet the “Unicorn” as he gripped onto the ball-shaped control stick tightly. He could no longer see the explosions that were on the path of the beams, nor could he see the movements of the other enemy units. He was only trying to find the white mobile suit that should be in low orbit.

Diagonally behind him, Lieutenant Cuarón squeezed the trigger too, and the escort squad-customized “Geara Zulu” fired the beam launcher. The bright light flew out straight, illuminating the red armor of the “Sinanju” that was racing in front. The “Sinanju” opened the thruster unit on the back that was like wings, and the way it flew above the layer of atmosphere could only be described as an archangel. Their units had boosters that were twice as large as the units themselves, and it had been more than 9 hours since they launched from the “Rewloola” as they took on the G-force that nearly knocked

them out as they raced here. It was definitely this crimson red archangel who managed to guide them through this dangerous course while accelerating, reach the Earth orbit and catch up with the “Unicorn”. The exhaustion of the long journey was immediately reset, and Angelo felt his breathe and strength rising up his body as he stared at the other end that had many lines of fire on the other side.

As they were racing along the same orbit, they were moving at a relative speed of 15km per second faster than the “Mock Wooden Horse”. The enemy ship would not have the chance to dodge, and naturally, they did not want to leave this chance hanging. There was less than 30 seconds until contact— (Our target is the “Unicorn”. Ignore the other units.) Frontal declared, and Angelo naturally accepted it.

(Zinnerman intends to get back Marida, so we’ll leave the “Mock Wooden Horse to them). Our aim is to fight the “Unicorn” and prompt it to activate the NT-D.)

“Yes!”

(No need to hold back on him. You won’t be able to beat the “Gundam” if you have no intention of fighting with the will to take down an opponent. You have to watch out for the magnum shots, for example.)

There was no need for him to remind them this. “Yes! Please let the escort squad open the way for you!” Angelo answered as he put his finger on the trigger of the completely charged beam launcher.

Angelo did not spend the time sleeping during the past 9 hours of journey. He spent this time trying to use past battle records to get a grasp of the enemy machine’s capabilities and the habits of the pilot, and completed a battle simulation to deal with the “Gundam”. First, he would have to let the enemy activate the NT-D and draw out the true nature of that person. After exchanging messages with Cuarón’s unit, Angelo would then move about 50km away from the “Unicorn” and squeeze the trigger completely. Cuarón’s unit would then fire at the same time, and the intersecting beams would form a cross of beam fires.

The two snipes of beams caused the “Unicorn” moving forward to stop the machine and rop in height. Angelo went by the opposing machine as he released grenades. The launcher inside the shield fired away, and the grenades continued to explode. As expected, the “Unicorn” continued to dodge as it was surrounded by beams. Angelo let the thrusters stop completely and let the machine descend several kilometers in height. He waited for the charge alert signal to ring, and

immediately squeezed the trigger.

As his sights got pulled by the G-force, the I field was generated as the “Unicorn” leaned on the shield. The approaching alert signal rang, telling Angelo that a rocket was flying over. It was fired by the “Unicorn”, and the physical ammunition that was moving at turtle pace compared to a beam closed in on him and exploded above his head.

“This little…!”

Angelo used the rebounding effect of the atmosphere to leap up and let the machine return back to the same orbit as the “Unicorn”. The “Sinanju” too skilfully dodged the metal balls that exploded and scattered as it fired a beam right back at the enemy. The “Unicorn” deployed the shield that was radiating an I-field in front of it as it blocked off all the beams that came right at him as it strafed sideways. It seemed like it was prepared for any bazooka shots as it continued to dodge, adjusting its height as it continued to retreat. The enemies were right on its orbit, but it continued to retreat without doing anything.

Looking at the “Unicorn” before, such actions were really unexpected. It was impossible that the enemy used up the ammunition. Even if the bazooka shells were used up, the “Unicorn” still had a beam rifle slung on its back, and it should have enough time to switch weapons and fire. Angelo fired the beam launcher that was still charging, and the thin beam went by the “Unicorn” as the bazooka shot came firing back. That shot rained diagonally in front of Angelo, and the metal balls scattered like rain. However, it merely caused a little damage to the “Geara Zulu”.

It seemed that the enemy was deliberately aiming the reticule away as he fired, and the mobility was too slow. *Is it because he’s worried that he’ll be dragged down by Earth’s gravity?* Angelo pondered for a while and looked at the “Unicorn” that would only retreat, concluded that this was not so, and gritted his teeth hard.

He could not feel any will to battle from the “Unicorn” up till now. It lacked the usual oppressiveness that would fight back as it continued to scamper around. *Is it not in good battle condition, or is it not intending to fight at all?* “You dare to treat me as an idiot…!” Angelo growled as his fingers on the ball-shaped control stick tensed up inadvertently.

“DO YOU THINK YOU CAN FIGHT WITH THAT KIND OF ATTITUDE ON THE BATTLEFIELD!? HURRY UP AND TRANSFORM INTO THE “GUNDAM”!”

If I can't have a proper fight here, it'll be meaningless to come here. Angelo squeezed the trigger of the beam launcher fully. The "Sinanju" too fired with its beam rifle, and the lone horned mobile suit continued to be exposed under several fires as it swayed its body like it was amidst the wind.

Part 10[edit]

((Right now, we have a vast and endless universe in front of us, one that is filled with all sorts of hidden possibilities, an ever-changing future. No matter how you came to be standing on this entrance, you have no need to bring your past into the new world.)

(No doubt about it. It's that red mobile suit. It just flew above us at an amazing speed!)

(The "Gundam" is moving away! Can't we let the cannons at the back support it!?)

(The cannons are having a tough go trying to defend this ship! What is the mobile suit squad doing!?)

The enraged voices could be heard over the ship's wireless communicator, and there was no doubt that Full Frontal had appeared on the battlefield. At that moment, an obstacle formed by a sharp 'presence' rose slightly, and Marida sensed that pressure passing through her back.

Marida darted her eyes side to side as she looked around at the faces of the silent hovering under the ceiling in front of her eyes, surrounding the stretcher. This 'presence' did not come from outside the ship. It was of a different direction from the many 'presences' outside, and there was a more direct and violent omen waiting in front of this passage. Marida turned her body that was held down onto the stretcher, and looked forward from past the helmet visor on a person's head.

After the shuttle launch was delayed, the surrounding men had to return to the central gravity block to evacuate, and none of them was paying attention to Marida. They would sometimes cringe due to the vibration that rocked the ship, and only thought about getting to safety as soon as possible.

Suddenly one of the men met Marida in the eyes. It seemed that Alberto noticed her stare from behind, and he turned his pale face behind at Marida who looked back at him without being able to close her eyes. She saw him blink hard as his face suddenly tensed up. He

reminded the subordinates beside him, saying, “Oi, the prisoners’ awake…!” Marida had no time to watch for the moment as she slipped out of the fasteners she loosened beforehand faster than the subordinates who noticed this.

She pulled her right arm out and reached for the belt on her shoulder. She then turned herself around and intended to get off the stretcher. Suddenly, the sound of a tremendous explosion echoed through the passageway.

The men were surprised as they got into position to defend themselves. The white smoke that came from the front surrounded their backs, and at that moment, 2, 3 more similar explosions rang consecutively. The man that was originally beside Alberto was blown back, and the stretcher tilted to one side as there was one man missing on the side, and Marida hurriedly reached her right arm that was the only thing that could move as she saw the wall of the corridor right in front of her to protect herself. An explosion rang again, “Hii…!” and Alberto’s cry echoed through the corridor.

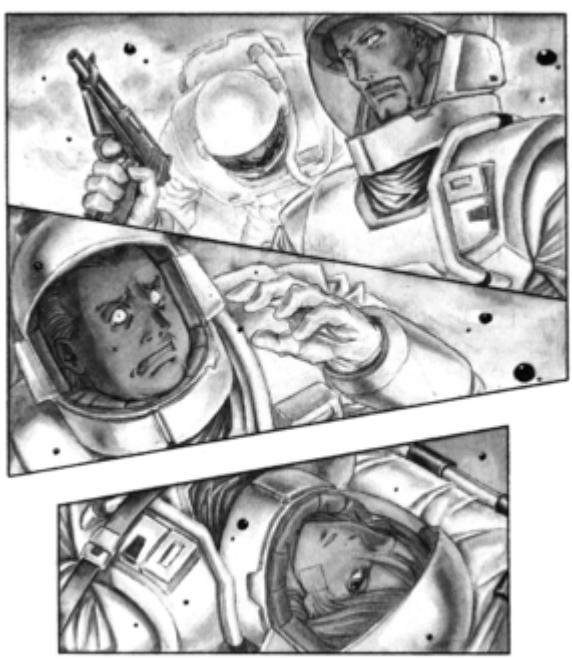
It was the last explosion. The passageway went silent without warning as only the anti-air guns vibrating noises could be heard from far and near. Marida floated together with the stretcher, and she saw blood floating in front of her. There was blood floating amongst the white smoke like amoeba, and it spurted out from the normal suits near the ceiling, drop by drop. They were changing shapes from time to time as they moved over Marida’s head. There were also 2 figures in normal suits crossing by each other in front, and they were also shot through the chest. Further in, there was a man wearing a normal suit leaning against the wall as he slumped down on the floor. He was most probably shot through the face as blood came out of his helmet like a blood tank. The arm that drew the pistol was swaying slightly in the air without being able to do anything.

The stinging stench of smoke and blood was mixed together. Marida could not even determine what was going on at that point. She first ensured that her body was free, and then heard the unique sound of a certain person’s magnetic soles on the floor, and stopped her hand that was intending to reach for the belt. It was the owner of that ‘sharp’ presence—that certain intruder who snuck into the ship beforehand and gunned down all the men around him in an instant. He was slowly moving through the smoke as he approached.

An ally? Marida thought that it was impossible as she turned her stare to where the footsteps came from, and as she looked over, there was a scream, “GYAH!” from there. Alberto knocked aside the corpse that

was floating in the air as he leaned his back on the wall. His thoroughly pale face was numb, and at this moment, the footsteps stopped. A certain person gasped as he stood not too far behind Marida, who turned her head slightly and looked at the other person from the side of the stretcher.

Like Alberto and the others, that man was wearing a heavily equipped Federation normal suit, and the recoilless handgun in his hands was pointed at Alberto. This man revealed his appearance from the helmet, but Marida did not know him. His eyes were not looking at her as his fierce looking face was trembling slightly. He opened his mouth a little, and he stared right at Alberto with a shocked and emotional expression. He was completely stunned as he looked like he forgot to remain wary about his surroundings; and Marida too wondered if that man was really the owner of the ‘presence’ as she looked at him in surprise.



“Master Alberto…why would you…”

The man did not notice Marida looking right back at him as he let out a

hoarse voice. Alberto was cuddling his head with his hands and remained curled up as he shivered. Marida moved her hand that stopped at this moment and undid the belt on the stretcher quietly.

“It was you? You’re the one who was instructed by Martha to board this ship…?”

Rage had already seeped into the man’s face that was wavering to shock, and this emotion caused him to point the handgun in his hand at Alberto’s helmet. “ANSWER ME!!” this aggressive roar caused Alberto, who was curled up, to cringe his shoulders.

“As a son of the Vist family, why did you killer Master Cardeas…WHY DID YOU DO SUCH A FOOLISH THING AS TO KILL YOUR REAL FATHER!!?”

Marida stopped her hand that was about to undo the belt on her waist as she pricked her ears to listen to the man’s explosion. BOOM. An explosion could be heard from afar, “…I, I had no other choice.” and the noise was mixed in with Alberto’s voice.

“If we lose the “Laplace Box”, the lifeline of the Vist Foundation will be severed. This goes for Anaheim and the other enterprises under it…so I—”

“Even if you say so, heavens forbid that a son kills his father! Master Cardeas has his own considerations, so why, why would the one last person who has the right to stop him…!”

“THAT MAN ONLY CARED ABOUT HIMSELF! HE THOUGHT THAT HE COULD DECIDE EVERYTHING JUST BECAUSE HE’S STRONG! HE THOUGHT THAT PEOPLE WHO WERE WEAKER WERE JUST SLACKING OFF…BUT I’M BEEN WORKING SO HARD…!”

“YOU’RE JUST BEING USED BY MARTHA BECAUSE YOU’RE WEAK! WHY DON’T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT!”

That man forcefully grabbed Alberto under the collar of the helmet and lifted him up. Marida saw that Alberto was a sobbing mess as his saliva and tears were all mixed together from past the shoulders of the man that were trembling with rising anger. “Aunt was very kind…” and she felt goosebumps rising all over her body.

“She was willing to recognize me and accept me. Dad doesn’t know about such things.”

Marida could not tell whether those eyes that were confessing were crying or laughing. “Such twisted logic…!” the man growled as his shoulder shuddered, and he jammed the gun right at Alberto’s throat.

Marida anticipated that the other person would squeeze the trigger, and undid the belt on her angles. She kicked herself off the stretcher and slammed herself into the man's back.

There's no reason for me to save. By the time Marida realized this, she had already taken action. There was an unknown impulse screaming inside her heart unconditionally, that this person should not be killed. She used her shoulder to knock into that man and grabbed a handgun beside her. That man took this sneak attack and tumbled, but he still pointed his fingers at Marida's flank and pulled her hand that would not let go of the handgun over to him. The sharp pain exploded in her ribs, and she was unable to breath at that moment as she was dragged in front of the man.

Marida instinctively raised her knee as she intended to aim for the man's crotch. At this moment, "Marida Cruz, I suppose…?" the man spoke to confirm, and Marida's body was tense with shock.

"Good, Zinnerman's waiting for you to return. I'm—"

As he spoke halfway, the man suddenly shut his mouth as he gave a sharp glare to the side. Then, the guns were blazing, and the man's face suddenly disappeared from Marida's sights.

Man was flowing from the side of the man's abdomen, and his body slammed into the wall as it spun around. Marida continued to remain tense as she turned to where the gunshots came from, and saw Alberto seated on the floor, holding a handgun he got from his subordinate's dead body.

He was giving an unusual expression at that man as he exerted more strength into the finger holding onto the trigger. Marida immediately held down his gun and looked over at the man, and the man who was holding onto his flank got up as he looked over at Marida. He did not look like someone from Neo Zeon—but she did not feel that this man was an enemy based on the fact that he mentioned the name of her master. While Marida was still trying to arrange her thoughts in her mind, "OVER HERE!" "THERE'S A GUNSHOT HERE!" a few voices rang from the other side of the smoke, and the sounds of the bells echoed through the hall.

There were many people with murderous intent charging over, and the man met them in the eyes before he kicked himself off the floor and skipped away from the scene. The side of his normal suit left blood bubbles in the air, and his back profile turned at the corner of the corridor before vanishing. "He's over there!" The shouts and gunshots were mixed together, and Marida saw the sparks of bouncing bullets

bounce off the wall and leaned her body to the wall as she crouched down. This would mean lying on Alberto, but she did not have the time to care about this, and Alberto, who was all curled up, did not show any signs of resistance.

Soon, a group of men in normal suits, wielding handguns landed on the floor of the corridor. A few men pursued after the man who turned around the corner, and someone said “Don’t let the people inside the ship find out. We have to deal with this ourselves.” “HURRY UP AND SHUT OFF THE ALARM!” another man yelled. Marida wanted to lift her head, only to be grabbed by the collar and pressed down on the wall behind her. The hand that reached forward in a flash clamped down on Marida’s throat, and the palm of the other hand grabbing her from above the normal suit. Marida wanted to resist, but she could not exert strength. As she struggled to remove the fingers on her throat, someone approached Alberto and said, “Are you alright, Master Alberto?”. Albeto, who was touched on the shoulders, suddenly jerked “DON’T TOUCH ME!” as he yelled with a change of emphasis.

Alberto pushed aside the subordinate who unwittingly moved back, and managed to stand on his feet by himself. He wiped away the saliva and tears on his face, and the abnormal expression on his face disappeared. He met Marida in the eyes for just a moment, whispered to his subordinate “This woman’s alright.” and looked away. The hand choking Marida’s throat relaxed, and she barely managed to get a breath of air.

“We’re heading back to the “Klimt”. Call the captain. I want to depart immediately.”

He quickly said as he turned his face that was still pale away from the two subordinates. “But the battle outside is still…” the subordinate answered, and Alberto angrily growled back, “I was nearly killed there!” The men’s showed their timid backs as they moved amidst the blood that was floating around.

“I don’t want to stay inside a ship that has an assassin prowling around. Call all the crew here.”

Alberto’s widened eyes were showing an abnormal glow at this moment. “Yes…” and the overwhelmed subordinates wanted to leave the scene. Alberto immediately kicked himself off the floor and yelled maniacally, “YOU SHOULD BE PROTECTING ME FIRST BEFORE YOU GO, IDIOTS!!” and this momentum pulled his body into the air. He realized that his back slammed into the dead body of someone who was shot “Hii…”, and screeched as he flailed his limbs frantically, wanting to leave the scene. The subordinates pulled his frantic body

away from the corpses and brought him away from the scene, while Marida ended up being strapped by another subordinate back onto the stretcher.

Marida had no idea if it was because she tried too much when she took action as the sharp pain on her flank did not subside. The throbbing pain continued to spread with time, and a sense of fatigue engulfed her body as she was unable to breathe freely. The growls of the crew could still be heard through the wireless communicator, but the men wielding handguns in one hand did not say anything, and Alberto, who was surrounded by them, did not want to look at anyone as his lips were just flapping and muttering. One could even hear him murmur, “It’s nothing bad, I didn’t do anything bad…”, and as the subordinates were wondering if their master was still normal, he ignored their stares as continued to murmur on like a curse. This caused Marida, who had no strength to resist, to feel goosebumps as she was taken away on the stretcher.

Alberto’s lost eyes that stopped seeing everything else in the outer world were gradually entering her mind. Marida took a short glance at his eyes, and she immediately had a vague understanding of what she was thinking when she wanted to save Alberto. The moment she heard of Alberto’s family background from the assassin, she could not bring herself to leave this man to her death. Just like how Banagher understood Marida, Marida too understood Banagher, and she knew about his birth, his upbringing, and the burden he shouldered. It was because, after that moment of ‘resonance’ between their minds, Marida probably had a better understanding of him than he himself.

This was the other life that originated from the same source, and the color in Alberto’s eyes were so similar to Banagher’s that they felt sad…

Part 11[edit]

(We are now starting at the beginning, and there is no need to be troubled about other people writing the scripts in your life. Just use the God in you to look clearly at the future that is about to begin.)

The extremely hot particles let out a flash, and this impact-like sound that could melt metal rocked the cockpit Banagher was in. The hyper bazooka barrel was sliced in half as it floated it, and as the machine leaned backwards, the “Sinanju” kicked it in the flank the moment the crossed.

The impact of 25 tonnes, coupled with the relative velocity, was

enough to crush a human body as it rocked the entire cockpit. The linear seat continued to shake nosily, and Banagher, who was on it, turned on the throttle to the maximum as he then stepped on the foot pedal with force. The recoil from the impact before caused the "Unicorn" to leave its original trajectory, and the machine dropped in height, causing Banagher to hurriedly light all the thrusters. The "Sinanju" continued to maintain its height skilfully as it continued to fire its beam rifle at the "Unicorn" that barely managed to prevent itself from falling.

"Hurry up and fight back! Aim properly!"

"I'm aiming!"

Banagher growled back at Daguza as he abandoned the severed hyper bazooka to ready his beam rifle. The reticule overlapped over the red machine, and the lock-on alarm pierced his ears. The source of Banagher's stress at this point was the Red Comet, the masked man who was called the "Second Coming of Char"—and Banagher visualized the scar between his eyebrows and the piercing stare. He sensed that his fingers on the trigger were so tense that they could not bend properly. At the same time, the mega particles came flying out of the "Sinanju"s beam rifle, and the "Unicorn" managed to dodge right at the last moment before squeezing the trigger a moment later. The depleted magnum cartridge was ejected, forming a column of high energy that flew out in a straight line, lighting the "Sinanju"s frame.

As the particles flew by, the purple "Geara Zulu" darted between them as it continued to fire its beam launcher. *I should be able to graze it at least.* Banagher gritted his teeth as he endured these words that accumulated in his mouth, and let the "Unicorn" fly away from the beam that flew above his head. He continued to search for the "Sinanju" that disappeared from the monitor while trying to break through the perimeter net the three enemy units set up. Once he sensed that he could not shake them off, he heard Daguza growl, "Firing to scare the Red Comet isn't going to work here!" as it went through his body.

"Hurry up and fight seriously. The NT-D should be able to activate if you face that guy. You'll be toyed till death if this keeps up."

"Bu…but…!" The anti-G capabilities on the assistance seat aren't complete. If I let the machine move at full power, Mr Daguza, you…"

Won't be able to hang on. Banagher said what he wanted to say deep inside his heart and said to his trembling body that he was just lying. He opened the helmet visor, wiped off his sweat, and checked his

current location with relation to the “Nahel Argama”. As he had been escaping wildly, the “Unicorn” changed trajectories many times, and at this point, he could not see the white mothership within the sensor. The “Nahel Argama” was moving away every second, and the “Unicorn” was moving into the axis orbit. No matter how Banagher tried to shake them off, Frontal’s squad continued to pursue, and it was a given fact that the “Unicorn” was the only target.

I’ll be killed if I don’t fight back— he knew this, but his body just would not listen. The fingers on the trigger were extremely tense, and Banagher felt that he was trying to dodge instinctively. That was because fighting was scary, and Banagher admitted this. He was scared about the transformation into the “Gundam”, that he would be devoured by the machine, and that he would become the core of the NT-D or whatever system it was. Logically, he knew that these were not as severe as death…no, he might be getting the wrong idea in the first place. The objective of Frontal and his men were probably wear down their forces before capturing this machine. If that were the case, should he just let them do as they please? This machine was meant to be in Neo Zeon’s hands. If he did not resist randomly and hand the machine to them—

“In that case, let me off and bring me back later.”

Daguza stopped Banagher from running away further with a fierce voice and showed a piercing stare. Banagher again held onto the control stick tightly with his hand that was not exerting strength.

“Those guys are probably aiming to wear out our side and capture this machine. But what will happen to the “Nahel Argama” once the “Unicorn” is gone?”

“…I understand.”

“Those guys are experts of war. They will not let go of prisoners easily or let go of enemies they can shoot down. Don’t forget, your friends are still on the ship—”

“I KNOW THAT! I know everything…!”

The faces and names of many people, including Takuya, Micott, Marida, Gilboa, Frontal, Audrey and Riddhe were all swirling in Banagher’s mind, and he felt uncomfortable and queasy. He stepped on the foot pedal and let the “Unicorn” accelerate.

He lit the thrusters and turned his back on the beams that were pursuing him as he did not bother to check the location of the machine and glided around on the orbit at midnight. “Banagher…!” Banagher

covered his ears and ignored Daguza's call as he merely thought about letting the "Unicorn" race forward. He was still very frightened, extremely frightened. He felt a burning sensation when he received this machine from Cardeas, and when he fought to protect Audrey, but at this point, he could not feel anything. The icy cold emptiness continued to swirl in Banagher's abdomen, and he knew that the tinge of warmth that was left within him was about to be taken away. That was good—no, perfect for him. That burning sensation had the tendency to make him act violently, and it would cause him to hurt and kill without realizing, and cause him to bear a lifetime of guilt as a dishonest bystander…

The approaching alarm rang, and Banagher's senses suddenly reacted, causing the machine to decelerate. He widened his eyes and saw the debris of "Laplace" approaching from the front on the enlarged window.

The curved frame was shown amidst space, and its whale-corpse like debris continued to be exposed on the orbit over the two axes. Its loose structure was not considered to be a cover, but Banagher did not care about this at all. He needed something to act as a cover, and he wanted to catch his breath without anyone seeing. The Intention Automatic System seemed like it may had detected this fear as it slowed the machine down on its own. The "Unicorn" viewed the "Laplace" debris as a lifeline as it reached its arm forward. It lit its verniers and ducked into the dim opening before stopping weakly. The shield that was deploying the I-field shut off at this point, and the dual-eye sensors that glowed under the facemask gradually lost its glow.

The voice of the speech that showed no signs of ending overlapped with the approaching alert alarm. Frontal's forces were approaching—but Banagher would not lift his head. His shoulders were rising and falling, and he was panting as if he just sprinted along with the mobile suit. *I'm useless, I'm really useless.* His panting seemed like it was going to mix in with his whimpers, and he gritted his teeth, but he still could not control his sobbing, and Daguza silently called out, "Banagher" at this moment.

"I'm getting off. Open the cockpit.

As per usual, is commanding tone did not allow for any suggestions. Eh? Banagher turned his head, but Daguza did not care as he suddenly reached for the display board and pressed the switch of the cockpit hatch.

The sound of airflow struck the helmet, and very soon, it could not be seen. The all-view monitor in front was switched off, and the part that

was the size of the hatch slid out. Soon, the debris that was shrouded in darkness appeared in front of them. Daguza let his tall and large body leave the assistance seat slowly as he floated out to the hatch, and beside him, Banagher saw him move, “At this time? Are you serious!?” and he shouted as he grabbed the other man’s elbow. Daguza silently got in front of Banagher and let his helmet stick over to the other party’s helmet.

“You should be able to fight seriously now. Hurry up and transform it into the “Gundam”.”

The vibration of the voice passed through the helmets, and it involved more human contact than the wireless communicator. His eyes saw through Banagher’s lies and weaknesses through the visor, “But that…!” and Banagher in term answered.

“It’s not...it’s not like that, it’s not like what you think. I just…”

“Banagher, I saw the moment where the NT-D was about to activate.”

Daguza said as he put his hand on Banagher’s hand that was placed on his elbow. On hearing these unexpected words, he blinked his teary eyes.

“It was the moment when we made contact with “Laplace”, when the speech started to play. It seemed like you didn’t notice it, but the NT-D seemed to be reacting to your emotions. It seemed that your heart sensed something when you heard the voice of the “Laplace” ghost.”

“My…heart?”

“This machine isn’t a killing machine…that’s meant to eliminate Zeon. There is another unique trait in the “Unicorn” that is completely different from that of a killing machine. The only thing that can pilot it is probably the pilot’s heart, a heart that can understand, gets hurt easily, and can cause fear in others, and also, a heart that’s fragile, lack efficiency, and one that should not exist sometimes.”

From behind the helmet visors, Daguza’s eyes that were giving a knife-like glint were smiling. A slight burning sensation beat within Banagher’s heart, and landed at the bottom of his abdomen that became gold. Banagher tried to look into Daguza’s eyes, and on a closer look, Daguza’s expression was wavering as well. Banagher stared at the eyes that were not different form his, and looked down at where the vibration came from.

“Maybe that is the true identity of the Laplace Program. It controls the NT-D activation conditions, and guides the passenger to the “Box”…

your father is really not a fraud after all."

These unexpected words caused Banagher's heart to jump, and he could only look away. "That's…" Daguza stopped Banagher with a wry smile "That's enough. I'll ask you later on regarding this."

"There's no time to talk. Once I go out, retreat into the debris and wait for my signal."

"What do you intend to do?"

"ECOAS has its own way of fighting. I rather do something worthwhile than to be a burden in the cockpit. You should fulfil your responsibility too."

Daguza grabbed Banagher's shoulder and pushed him onto the linear seat gently. "What's my responsibility…?" he asked, and Daguza pointed at his chest, "This place knows well." and said with a steady voice.

"This is a one and only cog that can make decisions on its own. Don't lose it."

After finishing off with this, Daguza moved his helmet away to break off contact. The eyes that had some form of closeness were gradually fading away, and the thick green normal suit that wrapped itself around the tall and large body floated out of the hatch. Banagher was bothered by this cockpit that suddenly felt wide, and called out through the wireless communicator. "Mr Daguza…!" (Close the hatch! The enemy's nearby!) Daguza attached the land mover onto the life support system on his back as he ordered, left a small trail of jet flares and vanished amongst the vacuum.

The motion sensor indicated that the enemy forces were gradually surrounding "Laplace". Banagher had no choice but to close the hatch, and tried to look for Daguza through the optically-corrected all-view monitor. *It's natural to be scared, it's alright to be scared, to run, but don't do anything foolish that will cause you to betray yourself'*— the words Banagher heard before swirled in his abdomen, his originally cold body started to heat up with a fire-like 'heat' within him, and he sensed this as he put his somewhat tense hands back onto the control stick. *Heart,* this ordinary term throbbed within Banagher's heart as if it wanted to let the 'heat' that was just born spread through the body.

Part 12[edit]

(Right now, it is 23:59 Greenwich Mean Time. I ask that everyone who is watching this telecast, if possible, please pray silently with me for

one moment. Think about Anno Domini, which will soon pass, think about the history of Humanity that everyone made, and offer your blessings.)

He had an idea of where to go and what to do before he left the cockpit. The voice of the speech continued to disturb the wireless communication, and he knew that his communication link with the “Unicorn” was still not severed. He first climbed onto the curved frame, had a rough look around the inside of the hollow, and then pulled out the SHMX explosive device in his portable armor pouch.

The other equipment Daguza had included a very fine 100m detonating cable, two flashbang grenades for zero gravity use and a recoilless automatic handgun. Excluding the emergency first aid, the strobe lights were the only things that were of decent use at this point, and if he had known that things would have developed to such an extent, he would definitely bring along a field equipment kit. He continued to protect his left arm that was still hurting from the wound, and he looked over at the bottom of the pillars that were intercrossed. Daguza put the a small suitable amount of the 3-phase explosive according to the usage requirements of the SHMX, 0.2 times the size of the opening. He then inserted the plug at the base of the pillar, pulled the detonation cable through the hole, climbed onto the inner wall on the other side, put one end of the cable on the rotating pipe cable, and installed a new SHMX under the fractured frame of the inner wall.

There was not much time left. The enemy forces were surrounding the relic, wary of any traps as they timed the moment to enter. The first one to enter would most probably be the “Sinanju”, and that red mobile suit not only had a motive, but had a selfish avarice to witness and take action personally, or it would be unable to relax. Even if the “Unicorn” activated its NT-D, the chances of the “Unicorn” would only have a 50% chance of surviving. Looking at the current situation, Banagher would be forced into despair and get crushed by the enemy, so he had to use this opportunity to buy any chance for the “Unicorn” to survive. He silently moved around the holes and let the detonation cable pass through the 40m diameter ring.

The sense of responsibility over making use of a child, and the soldier instinct within him caused him to understand that he should sacrifice himself—neither of these were the reason why he did this. In terms of risk and effectiveness, he understood that this was not a worthwhile action. *Why sacrifice so much for that kid?* Conroy would definitely laugh at him for this. *However that boy was the one who caused to me*

to act according to my thoughts. Daguza apologized to Conroy in his heart, felt that this was the time to do this, and moved his sight to the very cooling vacuum.

As an adult, Daguza bore the burden of the thing called reality up till this point. He wanted to hand his life to a child, a child who would think about the future. Of course, he did not think that he could wash away all his guilt after all the atrocity he did, but he felt surprisingly happy that he could do this. He, who only knew how to act on priorities to fulfil his duties, was leaving everything to a young life that had no blood relations or bonds with him, and even felt a sense of meaning amongst the term future. This heart of his that accepted all foolish thoughts was what he regretted over.

Perhaps this is how someone with the heart of a child would work. He made lots of concessions in life like choosing to become a machine that would only focus on executing its mission thoroughly. He was unable to say any words of encouragement to the wife he left, and if he had a child, his life would probably turn in a different direction. *So this is what it means to have another possibility, another future we should have, that we should look at the future with the inner god.* Daguza abruptly realized as he heard this speech that sounded like it was ending.

Hope or despair, everything depends on the attitude. The fact that I walked into a narrow road before the many shackles on me is just one of those everchanging patterns— Daguza gave a wry smile at this overly simplistic logic as he moved himself behind the pillar, having finished his assignment.

The “Unicorn” had already moved deep within the debris, waiting for Daguza to give the signal. If he could, he wanted to make contact with Conroy, but this wish could not be fulfilled amongst the vast sea of Minovsky particles. He looked up at the lighting glass above him and let the clear starry light shine on his face. *Bring it on,* he called out to the enemies waiting outside in space.

I’m alone. I’m not a machine, not a broken soldier looking for a place to die. It may be inefficient, a foolish thing to give my life blindly to a single person. Teach my body what kind of power of humanity has when it is released from its restrains— Daguza put his finger on the detonation switch, and he could see the thruster lights cutting through from the lighting glasss. The lights of the monoeyes flashed, and the human within this machine held its breath slightly.

Part 13[edit]

(I hope that the journey of all humanity into outer space shall be stable. I hope that the Universal Century is the age where results succeed. And I believe that, lying dormant in our hearts, the God called possibilities—)

The long speech ended up, and a blank descended upon them. All of a sudden, the darkness that was twisted with the hollow was blown aside by the vernier lights, informing Banagher that there was an enemy unit inside the relics.

“They’re here…!”

The red shadow was reflected off the broken glass, shining its monoeye as it looked over at Banagher. (Use the Vulcan!) Daguza’s voice rang through the wireless communicator, and Banagher gripped the control stick.

(Just scare him off. Shoot!)

Banagher did not have too much time to think. He instinctively moved his fingers, and the 60mm Vulcan cannons of the “Unicorn” let out a fire. The two lines of fire shattered the light retaining windows, shattering the profile of the “Sinanju” on it. The fragments continued to fly within the hollow, and the “Sinanju” raised the barrel of its beam rifle at the “Unicorn” as its feet landed on the inner wall, and the light shining through the windows lit it.

An explosion of fireball expanded from inside the hole, and the pillars that were starting to crack collapsed on the “Sinanju”. *Did Daguza set them up?* Banagher saw the “Sinanju” get crushed by a large pillar, and the knee that was kneeling down on the inner wall got caught in another explosion. The circulatory pipes that were buried deep inside the relic let out pressure, becoming shrapnel that rained down on the “Sinanju”, and one even pierced through the monoeye on its head. This fragment broke through the transparent plastic visor with the power of a cannon, destroying the main camera, and the scene of the red giant losing its sight appeared in Banagher’s eyes.

Despite losing the main camera, the sub cameras could help the machine carry out optical identification. The pilot would not lose his sight because of this. However, the psychological damage from being stabbed in the eyes would not mutter. (What!?) Frontal exclaimed, and Banagher could hear it from the wireless communicator.(NOW!) Daguza’s voice echoed through the place.

(HURRY UP AND USE THIS BEAM SABER…!)

Daguza yelled as his profile in the normal suit came rushing out from

the back of the pillar. He threw a grenade, and the flash exploded from the waist region of the “Sinanju”. The machine’s sub cameras could not work at this point, and it was obviously on the brink of toppling over. Banagher immediately reached his hand for the weapons select panel, chose the beam saber and pressed the trigger on his left hand. The “Unicorn” then moved its left hand quickly and opened its palm to wield the beam saber hanging on the right arm rack. After that, a second grenade exploded, and Daguza’s body that floated amongst the debris appeared amongst the flash.

(Stop kidding around!)

Frontal’s growl could be heard through the wireless communicator, and the “Sinanju” that looked like it had lost its balance swept its beam saber sideways. The burning hot blade came swinging down from above, and the rubble and got in its way immediately vaporized. Banagher saw this light burn off Daguza’s normal suit as well and disappeared. Before he disappeared, Daguza’s tall and burly body shrank to the size of a baby, and then vanished into the vacuum without even any bones left. This visual sight was etched in Banagher’s eyes.

Daguza vanished. He did not die, he vanished. The man who was still there a moment ago vanished without a trace, without even a sense of emotion or a sentiment being raised—

“YOU BASTAAARRRRRRDDDDDDDDD—!!!”

Banagher’s mind went blank, and the hairs on his body were raised up. His scream echoed through the cockpit, and the armor on the machine slid aside like it was expanding as the glow from the psycoframe showed itself to the outside.

The silhouette “Unicorn” that was in the hollow started to expand, and the heat and light was emitted from amongst the gaps as the armor split open. The lone horn broke into two, and the dual-eye sensor opened below the V-shaped antenna. The “Unicorn Gundam” raised its beam rifle without hesitation, and the nozzle immediately shot a large mega-particle block.

A torrent of light spread filled the hollow, and the massive energy, shockwave and scattered residual of particles passed through the wasteland in space. The voice of the ‘ghost’ could not long be heard, and the debris of “Laplace” that was shrouded in an ominous color let out a dying scream.

Part 14[edit]

The light came flying out from the lighting glass that was designed in the shape of a chessboard, and the cosmic dust that accumulated inside was blown outside by an explosion. The outer wall was blown aside by the expansion of the impact inside the hollow, and the chessboard-shaped window was ripped from within as the debris of “Laplace” was devoured by the powerful quake completely.

“What in the…!?”

The machine that wanted to enter the hollow first hurriedly retreated, and they adjusted their heights as they left the scene. Angelo saw that Cuarón’s “Geara Zulu” was following behind, and tried to look for the “Sinanju” amongst the dust. He lost contact with Frontal ever since the “Sinanju” entered the hole from the opening on the other side. *Did he use too much force and shoot down the “Unicorn”?* As Angelo wondered, the “Sinanju” escaped from the crumbling debris, and there was another profile that appeared from the dust.

The machine that shattered the lighting glass and was covered with shattered glass raced right above “Laplace”. This twin-eyed mobile suit was still dragging a trail of light from the psycoframe, and there was no way he could mistake it.

“So you’re finally became the “Gundam…!”

He suppressed the impulse to immediately take aim with the beam launcher as he stepped on the foot pedal. Angelo moved the machine to the upper right side of the “Unicorn Gundam” and yelled, “Cuarón! As we planned!” Cuarón’s unit immediately fired the beam launcher, and then lit the main thrusters behind. Angelo deliberately chose not to follow the “Unicorn Gundam” that stopped abruptedly and dodged as he fired the beam launcher at the empty space as according to the simulation.

The sparks of the interfering wave appeared on the sublight beam trajectory, and Angelo could see the light of the psycoframe with his naked eye. Due to the effects of the interfering wave, there was a short delay after the “Unicorn Gundam” used its I-field to block the beam. The enemy was fast, but it could only move around headlong directly, and the effects of Earth’s gravity on the low orbit naturally hindered his methods of evasion even more. Angelo sensed that his attacks were showing effects as his senses started to feel excited, “It’s working…!” he said as he raised his lips.

“He’s just a rookie, and the actions are just as what the simulation indicated. Surround him now!”

It's futile to forcefully pursue an enemy with much better mobility. I just have to grasp the movement habits of the enemy and shoot the beams at the predicted target. From the battle data, that guy is used to dodging by the right side, and this tendency will show itself obediently if it's caught in low orbit that felt like a realm. It's easy to catch up and pincer that guy— Angelo coordinated with Cuarón's machine as he fired a second beam launcher strike at the path of the "Unicorn Gundam". While he waited for the charge before launching next wave of attack, he would let loose the Strum Faust and let the enemy unit meet the fireballs while it moved at a fast speed. Cuarón too followed Angelo's action, causing numerous rings of light and beams to cross over on the "Unicorn Gundam" path.

Everything immediately cooled off, and the gas that became blueish-white remained in space, passing through the scars of explosions. The white machine continued to accelerate and brake as it let out the lights of the psycoframe, and the 2 "Geara Zulus" did not stop their hands firing as they gradually closed their perimeter. After an umpteenth beam hit the I-field interference, the "Unicorn Gundam" looked like it tumbled as it slowed down. (I'll go behind him!) Cuarón shouted through the wireless communicator. The relative distance was less than 10km, and the "Gundam" that was in disarray raised is beam rifle to aim as it had no choice left.

"It's okay to smash any part other than the cockpit. Go!"

Angelo shouted, and stopped the charge of his beam launcher as he squeezed the trigger. The 70% charged beam launcher let out a light, and the "Unicorn Gundam" that blocked the attack with its I-field staggered greatly. *This is the end—* Angelo caught sight of Cuarón's unit that encircled the "Gundam" quickly, saw him raise the beam hook high up, and saw an illusion of the beam that gathered in a form of the hook stab into the back rack of the "Gundam". The ejaculation-like sensation immediately rose up his body. *He has no time to look back, so just smash that white machine in the back viciously hard…!*

At that moment, the left arm of the "Unicorn Gundam" moved, and the beam could be seen from the elbow that reached behind.

There was no time to observe clearly. Right at the moment the "Geara Zulu" was about to swing down the beam hook, the "Geara Zulu" was stabbed through in the chest out of a suddenly. There was noise from the wireless, and was that the sound of the cockpit being crushed, or was it the sound of Cuarón's body vaporizing? Angelo could not understand what was going on immediately as he looked at the two machines that were clinging to each other in shock.

“The beam saber…!?”

The beam saber grip activated on its own as it was stored on the rack on the side of the left arm. The “Unicorn Gundam” did not look back, and did not look at the enemy’s location as it stabbed the beam particles appearing at its elbow into Cuarón’s unit. At this point, it turned its back on the “Geara Zulu” that was paralyzed in its limbs, staring right at Angelo. Its glowing eyes were emulating the red glow of the psycoframe, seemingly mocking him, *You’re next.* Before Angelo could even react, the elbow that was stabbed deeply into Cuarón’s unit suddenly raised backwards forcefully, and the “Gundam” pulled the beam saber out of the stabbed “Geara Zulu” and raised it over the head.

The white machine spun around, and the “Geara Zulu” was thrown right at over. That machine that lost its functionality was immediately devoured in a scorching ring of light, and Angelo’s sight was covered in white. *That guy wasn’t forced into a tight corner. We’re the ones baited to it slowly and surely.* This understanding came together with the wave of impact, and Angelo could only let his machine react hastily. As the noise got worse due to the electrowave interference, Frontal’s voice was mixed in, (Run for it, Angelo!!)

(That person’s not normal now. Hurry up and leave the orbit while you still have propellants!!)

Frontal’s voice sounded like it was trembling, and it intensified the fear within Angelo by several times. Angelo accelerated to increase the height and escaped from Cuarón’s unit that became gas. The “Unicorn Gundam” put the shield on its back and pulled out beam sabers emitting beam blades from the racks on its arms as it pursued from behind. It sliced aside the gas body that remained there and darted up from the feet of Angelo’s unit. This appearance that would be aptly described as a demon closed in on Angelo’s unit, and the fear of *being gnawed and devoured* went through Angelo’s body.

“You monster…”

He kept trying to aim with the beam launcher, but the impact struck the cockpit this time. Angelo bent over greatly, and saw that the beam launcher that was sliced in 2 flew about his head. He then immediately saw the “Unicorn Gundam” go above him, crossing its hands. The beam sabers that were activated like tonfas were interlaced like a cross, and he saw two blades swing down to both left and right sides. The gradual impact and the noise that filled the all-view monitor, and at that moment, the head of the “Geara Zulu” that was sliced let out sparks, and the monitor that switched to the sub-camera showed the head flying afar.

The “Unicorn Gundam” glared over at the “Geara Zulu” that lost its head, and raised the beam saber that was about to deal a fatal blow. Angelo did not have the time to experience his own death as he stared at the scythe of the red-glowing god of death. At this moment, a vernier flare suddenly appeared in his ears, and a mega particle light went by the “Geara Zulu” right after the glow of the psycoframe backed off, drawing a bright beam of light in what was originally a vacuum. Two, three beams then overlapped it, and Angelo knew that the “Sinanju” was below, giving covering fire.

The “Unicorn Gundam” rolled sideways to dodge the beams that kept coming, and lowered its height in one shot as it charged right at the source of these shots. As its enemy drew the beam sabers and went right at it, the “Sinanju” lit the main thruster on its back as it raced forward. Both sides clashed within a second, and their sabers were locked in on each other. At the next moment, both sides went aside in the direction they were headed. They fired beams at each other, drew an ‘8’ sign and clashed again. Whenever they clashed, the orbital speed for both machines would be negated, and the numerous fragments that were peeled off from the debris of “Lapalce” floated by the feet of the two mobile suits that were gradually falling. Those shrapnel continued to be dragged into the atmosphere, leaving red trails on Earth at night as friction took ever

“CAPTAIN!”

If this kept up, both machines would be dragged down to the landscape by Earth’s gravity. Angelo made a rough check on the unit’s damage, and he lowered his unit’s height to cover the “Sinanju”. However, he understood that there was no room for him to enter in this battle. The debris of “Laplace” was collapsing from its base as a large amount of shrapnel covered the whereabouts of the two units, making it hard to find them. In this situation, it was impossible for this unit that lost its main camera and beam launcher to interfere.

“CAPTAIN, PLEASE LEAVE THIS PLACE! YOU CAN’T STAY HERE…!”

Frontal, the Red Comet, would be burnt to crisp here. Angelo wanted to reach his hand out to help, but he could not save anything, and he could not do anything—this thought was scarier than death as it crushed Angelo’s heart. The headless “Geara Zulu” was unable to move, and below its feet, the numerous falling stars continued to drag red tails as they were gradually swallowed to the bottom of the atmosphere.

Part 15[edit]

“We lost the laser signal of the “Sinanju”! We can’t tell its position amongst the debris of “Laplace”!”

Flaste’s voice echoed through the bridge, and on the main screen in front of him, the debris of “Laplace” could be seen corroding as it continued to fall, and the rubble continued to plunge into the atmosphere like firedust. At this point, the debris of “Laplace” was 170km, and the “Sinanju” was nearby. They would soon reach the atmosphere approximately 50km later—and nobody would accept the joke of the Red Comet becoming the Red Shooting Star. “Where’s the “Gundam”?” Zinnerman growled.

“The psyco monitor is still functional. We can determine the location of the “Gundam” here.”

“Right, if we can catch up to the “Gundam”, we’ll be able to find the whereabouts of the “Sinanju”. Turn around and change our orbital course. We need to take the two machines in before they get dragged down by gravity.”

There was no other choice. Zinnerman stared at the screen that was giving red hot glows from time to time as he asked Flaste to confirm, “Can we do it?” If they wanted to approach the debris of “Laplace”, they would have to first break free from the current orbital path they were on and navigate two courses down. The “Garencieres”-class ship was different from the much smaller mobile suits that were nimble, and it was not easy for it to change its course as and when it wanted. Flaste’s fingers skimmed down the touch panel of the console, “It might be a little rough steering the ship, but it’ll work somehow if we use our atmospheric assistance navigation.” and he answered without looking back. “I’ll leave it to you. Don’t let this ship fall first.” Zinnerman answered as he brought the wireless microphone to his hand.

“Gilboa, has the guest called you yet?”

(No…response. The “Klimt” has already broken away from the “Mock Trojan Horse” and is on course to the atmosphere. If…we…)

The communication conditions were really bad as the laser signals would be interfered by the trails of fire in battle. It would be a waste of time to even click his tongue as Zinnerman looked over at the time counter on the screen. It was 00.28 at this point, way past the moment they agreed to take back the guest, and the counter showed that they were 3 full minutes over the time for battle. Looking at the fact how the “Klimt” broke away from the “Nahel Argama”, it seemed that Gael did not reach his original priority as he probably let Martha’s subordinate slip away. It was impossible to tell without contact whether Gael

managed to meet Marida.

Shall we stay here to bet on a single trace of hope, or do we prioritize saving the mastermind of the "Sleeves"? Zinnerman held onto the microphone, stared at the enlarged image of the "Mock Trojan Horse", "Can't be helped. Abort the current operation." and painfully eked out his words as he ordered.

"From now on, we're going to change the course and support Frontal's forces. Gilboa's squad is to provide direct cover for the "Garencieres"."

(But…!)

"We still have a chance. We definitely mustn't lose the Captain and the key to opening the "Box"."

In that case, you're going to lose someone important to you again — Zinnerman cut off his inner cry and the power of the microphone, and then turned to the window with the psyco monitor. The language of machine was displayed on the monitor, scrolling down at an alarming rate, and this was vastly different from when the speech of the First Prime Minister was heard. Most probably, the seal of the Laplace Program was unraveled after the NT-D was activated, giving new information.

Suddenly, Zinnerman had an uneasy feeling. The Newtype Destroyer System could remove the limiter of the machine and let the "Unicorn Gundam" gain a death god like power. Frontal once said that once this system was activated, even the pilot would end up possessed by the system and become a processor that would only view psycowaves as antagonistic intent. If that were the case, Banagher Links would—

Part 16[edit]

The beam saber suddenly flashed by, and the pillar of the steel frame was melted apart. The pillar that was sliced off by the beam saber passed through the lighting window and gradually landed to the bottom of the atmosphere, but Banagher did not care about this as he only cared about searching for where the "Sinanju" moved after dodging above. His thoughts were clearly agitating the "Unicorn Gundam" movements, and the machine moved faster than the flesh as it pursued the "Sinanju".

The joints that were lubricated by magnetic coating quickly spun around, drawing two beam sabers from the ends of the arms—the tonfa-like swinging speed was too fast for the eyes to catch up, and the "Sinanju" continued to dodge the thrusts from the enemy with bare minimum dodged as it raised the beam sabers in its hands to slice

horizontally. The 4 beam sabers clashed with each other, letting out sparks, and the explosive lights lit the debris of “Laplace” from inside as the two machines were knocked aside to both ends of the debris. Banagher used the hooks on the feet to get his footing on the only stable graound, and the beam rifle that was equipped on the left arm attachment fired.

The last magnum cartridge was ejected, and the beam that was fired passed through the hollow charged right at the “Sinanju”. The shockwaves caused the exterior of the debris to be crushed, and the red machine dodged this beam of light at the critical moment, only to be seen vaguely amidst the torrent of fragments. The large debris speed continued to drop by a notch, and the height meter let out an alarm as Banagher had already entered the danger zone, but he did not care. Banagher kept the beam tonfas, let the machine lean towards the shelter of the debris, and loaded the spare magazine into the rifle in the right hand. *This is the one guy I must take down*—Banagher was prompted by the burning sensation in his stomach as he fired at the “Sinanju” that was hidden behind the debris as well.

The thick and large beam pierced through the debris of “Laplace”, uprooting the lighting windows. The red machine darted between the glass pieces flying all over the place, let out the thruster lights and left the relic. *Why is it that I just can’t take down this guy?* Banagher pursued the “Sinanju” out of the hollow. The height at this point was 158km, and the “Unicorn Gundam” was approaching the thin layer of atmosphere in space. The machine that was slightly hot squeezed the trigger to fire a second shot, and the sound of the magnum catridge behind ejected could be heard within the cockpit. In the wireless communicator, a familiar voice spoke, (Banagher, stop if you can hear me.)

(If this keeps up, both of us will be dragged down by Earth’s gravity. We’ll get burnt in the atmosphere.)

I know that. The burning sensation deep within the stomach—the ‘heat’ that became a core that was out of control as it answered, and his eyes that were in unison with the machine were pursuing the red enemy. *You’re not going to fight because it’s dangerous!? Are you kidding? You think this is a joke!? YOU’RE THE ONES WHO TOOK ACTION FIRST! YOU’RE THE ONE WHO KILLED DAGUZA! IF YOU WANT TO STOP, JUST GO AHEAD AND DIE THEN! JUST DIE WITHOUT A TRACE TOGETHER WITH DAGUZA…!*

The thoughts that could only think about attacking yelled, and the “Unicorn Gundam” fired its 3rd shot. (You just won’t listen…!) Frontal

retreated back and fired a beam back that pierced through the debris. The I-field on the shield blocked this attack, and Banagher leaped above the head of the “Sinanju”. The “Unicorn Gundam” got tumbled by the flood of rubble as its rifle reticle aimed at the red machine from extremely close in. at that moment, he suddenly sensed a heavy presence coming from another direction.

Banagher immediately let the machine flip and pointed the beam rifle at the direction where the pressure came from. The rubble that was shed became shooting stars that were falling onto the atmosphere, and he saw the silhouette of a triangular shaped VITOL ship rushing over. The one name that appeared in his white-hot mind was “Garencieres”, and though his fingertips were shivering as he held onto the control stick, he did not know why he was trembling. Making the situation more problematic were the two “Geara Zulus” beside the “Garenciere”, firing the beam rifle in their hands, firing restraining shots around the “Unicorn Gundam”. These actions became an unnerving pressure in Banagher’s mind.

The “Sinanju” used this opening Banagher left as he was distracted by the pressure and quickly raised his height. *You dare to come here and get in my way…!* He was driven by this intense and explosive ‘heat’ as he aimed the reticule at the “Garencieres”. At this distance, the beam magnum could take down that ship in one hit. The nerves attached to all parts of the machine determined this, and right when the “Unicorn Gundam” was about to squeeze the trigger, a “Geara Zulu” floated right in front of the “Garencieres”, opening its limbs out wide as it looked like it wanted to block the attack.

(DON’T SHOOT, BANAGHER!)

This familiar voice hit his head directly, *Mr Gilboa?*, and caused him to react as the voice calling out the other person’s name stopped to echoed through the chest. In an instant, the mind that was agitated quickly cooled down. Banagher blinked his eyes that recovered, but it happened right after the “Unicorn Gundam” squeezed the trigger.

The mega-particle that was 4 times as strong as an ordinary beam rifle was released from the gun, and this vortex struck the “Geara Zulu” directly. The head that had the blade antenna was knocked off, and the limbs that were spread out were blown apart as that “Geara Zulu” was swallowed by the exploding fireball. The large ring of light appeared in front of the “Garenciere”, and the noise that sounded like a cry rang through the wireless communicator.

“Mr Gilboa…why…”

The hoarse voice came out from Banagher's mouth, and the light in front of him seeped into his skeleton. That was the crew member of the "Garencieres" who was talkative, cheerful, and liked to take care of people, the father of Tikva and the other two children. He died; he vanished just like Commander Daguza—

I killed him. I killed him. I'm the one who killed him. Banagher's thoughts started to unravel, and the burning sensation that was rampaging deep within his abdomen vanished as an icy cold emptiness spread through his body. The nerves that were linked to the machine were being severed line by line, and the senses that were exposed to the outer world were gradually being enclosed in darkness. At the next moment, the other "Geara Zulu" fired its beam rifle at the "Unicorn Gundam", and though there were sparks that pinged off the I-field on the shield, his numb body of flesh made it looked like a flame on the opposite shore. The machine that was deflected by the interference tilted greatly, and the "Unicorn Gundam" crashed backwards into the debris of "Laplace" that was breaking up with cracking sounds, before being completely swallowed by the torrent of rubble in an instant. Banagher's completely saturated mind and soul were sunk into the linear seat, and he did not move a finger as he stared at the debris of "Laplace" that was moving away from him.

The value on the height meter continued to fall, and the alarm kept ringing inside the cockpit. The silhouette of the "Garencieres" quickly disappeared, and the all-view monitor was filled with shooting stars with red tails. *I'm falling,* Banagher muttered in a corner of his stiff consciousness. The white machine was stained in blood as it continued to be dragged down to the bottom of the gravity well. It was like a broken puppet as its let the flames of purgatory burn its filthy armor as it. Inside this machine was a soul that was swallowed, a body of flesh that committed a sin again, ready to die—

"…Help me."

Mr Daguza, Mr Gilboa, dad; someone save me. Banagher could only let out a mosquito-like plea as he weakly reached his hand into the space. In front of his trembling fingers, the all-view monitor was dyed a burning hot color, and the machine malfunction windows were overlapping over it continuously.

Part 17[edit]

"Change our course! Open the ballute, prepare the traction wire. Hurry up and estimate the course. We have to take back the "Unicorn" immediately."

Otto immediately instructed and turned his sights to the enlarged visual displayed ion the main screen. The air heating up due to the compression caused the white frame of the “Unicorn Gundam” to be dyed completely red. At this point, the height was 112km, and it was no longer a height where it could move up on its own power. If they do not do something to save it, that machine would end up burnt to nothing.

The ballute that was installed at the tail of the ship was opened, and the battleship was at its limit as it tried to descend while trying not to be caught in the gravity. One of the “ReZELs” that were protecting the ship was lost in battle, and the other was moderately damaged, and could not enter the Atmosphere. In this case, the “Nahel Argama” had to take action directly and pull up the “Unicorn Gundam” directly. Otto grabbed onto the handrail of captain seat and waited for a voice to repeat his order. However, Liam replied back with a growl-like voice, “We can’t do that!”

“It’s falling too fast. We really can’t catch up like this.”

They needed to move the ship from the equatorial orbit to the axes orbit, carry out complicated navigation calculations, find the time needed to establish a rendezvous route with the “Unicorn Gundam”, and check the remaining time the “Unicorn Gundam” has left before it burns up in the atmosphere—*Calm down, Liam’s stare was telling him this. He looked away from her and suppressed the urge to lash out about what they should do. “There’s still the “Klimt”!” Mihiro’s voice caused Otto to turn around in shock.*

“The “Klimt” is moving into the atmosphere from the axes orbit to avoid the battle just now. It’s current course can rendezvous with it.”

Mihiro probably did her own estimates on the “Klimt” course on her own as she quickly reported her conclusions. She sent the results she obtained to the main screen as she turned her wide round eyes to look at Otto. Despite it being a battlefield, the Vist Foundation ship had already disengaged in a half-peremptory manner and started to fall. If they were moving along the axes orbit, they would be able to meet the “Unicorn Gundam” if they made some adjustmentst to the course. “Tell them to do it!” Otto did not care about anything else as he yelled.

“Yes.” Mihiro answered and turned back to the console, trying to establish contact with the “Klimt”. Soon, all normal communications would be obstructed by the plasma air, and the “Unicorn Gundam” would not be able to contact the outside were. Otto had no interest in whatever happened to the “Laplace Box”, and he did not care about ensuring the “Unicorn Gundam” was in one piece, but the only thing he

insisted on was that he could not allow the pilot inside to die. If he died here, the sacrifices of those who risked their lives to save him in the raid on “Palau” and those who died in battle would become completely meaningless. *Please make it,* his heart muttered as he stared at the “Unicorn Gundam” that got redder on the screen. “That won’t do. Stop it…!” a sharp voice suddenly rang through the bridge, shaking the atmosphere even further.

“You can’t allow the Foundation’s ship to reach the “Unicorn”…”

A tall and large man looked like he eked out this voice as he winced painfully, bending his body down. Otto looked at this man’s appearance through the helmet of the normal suit, and did not recognize this man’s face. *Is there someone who looks like this amongst the NCOs?* He brought his body out from the captain’s seat and looked carefully at the face of this man that should be 45, 46 years old. “Who are you?” Liam ignored this as she let out an interrogative shout. The man did not answer as he turned his oily and sweaty face to Otto. He then stepped off the floor as if he was going to fall forward.

The man pushed aside Liam who intended to stop him as he approached the captain’s seat. Otto noticed that the man grabbing onto the handrail had his hand dirtied by blood.

“We must use this ship to take back the “Unicorn”. Alberto won’t save him…Alberto won’t save Banagher Links…”

The man panted as he finished, and used his other hand to hold onto this flank. Blood bubbles were rising from the position the man was holding onto, and Liam, who was intending to suppress the man from behind, grasped. He was wearing a normal suit with the ship’s name on it, but this man was not part of the crew. This unknown man however spoke of the name “Unicorn” and Banagher…

“What’s going on. Who exactly are you…?”

Part 18[edit]

The space shuttled entered Banagher’s sights in a horizontal manner, and let out a traction wire from the tail of the ship. This several hundred meters long wire straightened amidst the scorching vacuum, and it looked like a spider web entering hell. It was unknown if it was the Intention Automatic System responding to his senses, and the “Unicorn Gundam” that moved its hands on its own reached for the wire as the red hot machine was dragged behind the shuttle.

(“Unicorn”, do you copy? Our ship will enter the atmosphere directly. Grab the wire and climb onto the ship. Can you do it?)

The voice of the shuttle's captain entered Banagher's ears as the interaction circuit was opened. Banagher however did not have the strength to answer back as he blankly stared at the one lifeline in front of him. The wire was starting to reel in, and the space shuttle that was covered in the shock cone loomed in on Banagher as it got bigger. The "Unicorn Gundam" tried to leave the burning hot place as it moved on its own, and grabbed onto the wire to move towards this shuttle that reached out to him.

Let your heart decide—Daguza's words suddenly appeared in Banagher's frozen heart, and he turned his slightly loose face up suddenly. *My heart is controlling this guy. I want to live, I want to be saved,* his heart was shouting shamelessly like that, and he even pulled the lifeline to me. He felt despair. This despair was giving him guilt of regret that was driving him to death, but in the end, the instincts of survival still took priority. His heart that was greedily looking for survival was desperately grabbing onto the wire.

How shallow of me, he felt really perplexed. He was the one who killed Gilboa, he was the one who robbed Tikva and the kids of their father. There was no need for him to kill anyone in the first place. *Mr Gilboa merely opened his body wide to protect the "Garencieres", but I fired at him. I fired at that defenseless unit in the midst of my anger. Did the machine do this? Or did my heart do it when it got swallowed by it? Or did the machine do it on command from the heart…?*

Ahh, I don't understand anymore. I don't want to think of anything at all. I just want to rest even if it's for a moment. I can rest if I can let the machine climb onto that shuttle. Once I enter the shockcone, I hide from the burning hot airflow. If I can reach there—

(…nagher. Banagher Links, do you hear me?)

A familiar voice rang out from beneath the noise, and there was a commotion within the wireless communicator inside the helmet. This was not the voice belonging to the shuttle captain. It was not a voice from the communicator. This voice was a call from a distant place. Banagher lifted his head slightly and looked left and right.

(Alberto Vist is on the "Klimt". Listen, you absolutely must not trust him. If you can enter the atmosphere successfully, leave the shuttle as far as you can immediately. You definitely must not listen to his instructions.)

The voice continued on with a painful tone. The system indicated that the voice from the "Nahel Argama", but Banagher remembered that he heard this voice somewhere before. It was the mobile suit pilot who

intended to risk his life to attack the ship—this voice came from the man who only cared about finishing his own words. The tone he was speaking in sounded like a father who knew him. However, as Banagher continued to think vaguely, a certain line in those words created a stronger impression. It started to twirl within Banagher's mind, and he cautiously, fearfully reflected on the words that entered his chest.

Alberto Vist…Vist?

(Alberto Vist took action based on the Foundation's instructions. Your father, Cardeas Vist was killed by Alberto. He was fearful that the "Laplace Box" will fall into other people's hands. To prevent that from happen, they'll definitely…")

Bfft. The voice was suddenly cut off, and the wireless communicator was cut off. This interruption was rather abrupt even though they entered a block area where the communication to the outside could not work. Banagher, who felt some light brightening his heart somewhat, reached for the communication panel screen (I had no choice) another voice caused him to stop.

(The Foundation can't live on without the Box. But that man intended to bring the "Box" outside.)

This voice that sounded like it came from the miry swamp caused Banagher to feel goosebumps under the pilot suit. He checked that the voice came from the communication circuit of the shuttle, pricked his ears a little and heard Alberto's voice that sounded rather agitated.

(That man wants to hand the "Box" over to Neo Zeon, to scatter the seeds of new discord and maintain the prosperity of Anaheim and the Foundation…I don't really know the logic behind it. This is really the kind of thinking that man would have. But even if we don't do so, the Foundation can continue to run. Over a long time, we learnt means to control from even through war. We know that whether it's the Federation army or the Neo Zeon army, they're just a cog in the economy.)

It was that man. The way Alberto called Cardeas showed a seemingly endless gloomy tone other people could not know of. Banagher heard Cardeas' voice in the same cockpit—he recalled the moment when he heard Cardeas talking about war merchants through the wireless communicator and arguing with a certain peson. He felt the breath he swallowed feel as heavy as a lead block.

That certain person, that person who killed Cardeas and intended to

prevent the “Box” from being leaked was Alberto, the one who gave him an antagonistic intent right from the beginning…Alberto Vist.

(The Foundation has the “Box”. As long as this fact doesn’t change, it doesn’t matter even if the “Box” doesn’t exist. The key to opening the “Box” has no reason to exist. As long as we can destroy the “Unicorn”, everything will be back to normal. Don’t you understand? To a lot of people, you’re the seed of disaster.)

This greasy and sticky voice tortured Banagher’s eardrums, and an unknown hatred was entering his chest. *Right, I should have known about this,* Banagher suddenly grasped on this understanding that rose up in him. Right from the first time they met, he had a first impression that they met before. Of course, that was to be expected. Banagher saw photos of Alberto’s youth before they met.

Deep inside the Vist Foundation, there was a photo that was set up on the grand piano. There was a slightly plump photo standing between a Cardeas who was still relatively young and a woman who looked like Alberto’s mother. The unhappy expression that boy showed looked like it was meant to be displayed to everyone who picked up the photo—

(If you want to hate, hate father. *Hate our father.*)

The voice pierced through Banagher’s chest, and then, there was a physical impact that rocked the cockpit. The connected ignition bolt was activated, and the traction wire was severed from the shuttle right from the end.

The shuttle that was originally acting as cover for the “Unicorn Gundam” moved away, and the thin plasma air quickly surrounded the machine. The air rushed upon the machine as if it wanted to break it down, and the “Unicorn Gundam” that was glowing red hot was thrown into the center of the atmosphere, dancing in the storm of hot air like a kite with its string snapped.

Banagher’s vision started to spin in a confusing manner, and the plasma air flow continued to blow by the cockpit. The temperature in the machine gradually rose, and the warning alarms continued to sway amidst the burning hot air. *Nobody will save me. There’s no worth in saving me. Everything I know about is wrong.* Banagher yelled with a voice that did not make a sound. *I shouldn’t be here, I shouldn’t be sitting in this, even my birth onto this Earth is wrong*— Banagher’ yell was vaporized by the additional heat, and the color of flames gradually covered everything. The “Unicorn Gundam” was surrounded by the burning flames of purgatory, and fell into the depths of a real hell.

Part 19[edit]

The ship that was 120m in length blew through the compressed air that was radiating a plasma glow. The atmosphere and intense tremors rocked the “Garencieres” as the bilge covered with insulated material was throbbing, dyeing the main screen on the bridge a bright red. The current height was 90km, and the ship would move through the exosphere and down into the mesosphere where they could not call outside. (I’ll let it to you, captain). As the entire bridge was rattling, Frontal’s voice entered Zinnerman’s ears somewhat.

(Get back the “{Unicorn” no matter what. We’ll leave the frontlines on our own…}

The noise interference that got worse overpowered the words after that. “Seriously, saying such selfish things…” Flaste’s grumbling voice followed afterwards. The “Garencieres” was originally a ship built to return to Earth, but Gilboa had been the one who controlled the ship whenever they reentered the atmosphere. Flaste could control most of the avionic equipment, but there was a lot of burden to Flaste who had

to execute atmospheric entry for the first time. Also, the “Garencieres” had to pick up a fallen object at this time.

Everyone on the bridged lamented that GIlboa was not around, but they understood that this was not a situation where they had the time to mourn for the dead. Zinnerman stared at the “Unicorn Gundam” on the screen that was dyed red hot, and saw that there was a lifeless puppet covered by a shockcone, limp as it fell through the atmosphere, a silhouette that was basically impossible to distinguish.

The “Klimt” that was moving through the axes orbit suddenly broke away from its original entry path and gradually glided into the mesosphere. That Foundation ship once managed to reach the “Unicorn Gundam” successfully, but it suddenly did the shocking thing of breaking the traction wire. No matter whether that was an accident or intentional, it would not change the fact that the “Unicorn Gundam” would be burnt up in a few minutes. The debris of “Laplace” was completely burnt out as it became numerous bits of rubble that rained down through the atmosphere. Zinnerman glanced aside at that scene as he prompted with a panicked voice, “Can’t we speed up any further?” Flaste’s hand did not move away from the steering plate, “I’m trying!” as he yelled.

“The functions aren’t working well because we forcefully changed paths. If we hurry up, even we will be dragged down by gravity.”

“It doesn’t matter! Don’t think of what happens afterwards. The most important thing now is to bring the “Unicorn Gundam” back on board.”

We definitely mustn’t mess everything up and put Gilboa’s death to waste. “I’m telling you, we won’t be able to save ourselves here!” Flaste continued to turn the steering plate as he grumbled meaninglessly and raised the angle of the ship as it entered the atmosphere. The outside of the ship hull started to heat up, and the “Garencieres” continued to accelerate bit by bit. It was still too slow. The current height of the “Unicorn Gundam” was 75km at this point, and there was a likelihood that the machine that was being charred black would break up before the “Garencieres” could cover the relative distance of 10km. Zinnerman picked up the microphone, and though he knew that this would not reach the ears of the other person, he spoke, ““Gundam”! Banagher Links! Do you hear me!?”

“This is the “Garencieres”. We’re now going to take you back in. Adjust yourself as much as you can and match our relative velocity, or else you’re going to burn out completely before we meet up if this keeps up.”

As both sides could not contact each other here, there was no reason for this signal to reach outside. “It’s not working…?” Zinnerman muttered, and looked away from the wireless communicator that was giving only static. He lost Gilboa, failed in the operation to save Marida, and ended up seeing the key to the “Box” get crushed. No matter how much he cursed his inaptness, he could not be satisfied. As he looked away from the screen, “That…!” Flaste’s shouted entered Zinnerman’s voice.

Flaste stared at the screen in shock, and at where he was looking, the “Unicorn Gundam” moved its legs, trying to adjust the machine’s posture. It turned itself to where it was falling and stretched its limbs out wide against the air flow. The shield that was put in front of the machine was raised to block the waves of heat. The round-shaped shock cone expanded like it was exploding, and the machine that looked like it revived started to slow itself down.

The air that turned to plasma scattered in front of the shield, and the red hot color of the machine was gradually turning back to its original white color. “Is that an I-field?” Zinnerman ignored Flaste’s question and stared at the machine profile that was gradually approaching the “Garencieres”. *This isn’t a coincidence, that guy used the shield as a rudder to block the airflow and intended to rendezvous with the “Garencieres”. “It’s glowing…” The crew member on the navigation seat muttered. “It’s not the light created from friction, what exactly is it?” Flaste too asked, and Zinnerman heard their words as he looked at the “Unicorn Gundam” on the enlarged visual that was optically corrected. The light that looked like it was glowing from inside the machine to him did not look like it was created from heating.*

Is that the so-called psycoframe glowing on its own? A chilly feeling suddenly entered Zinnerman’s chest as he again picked up the wireless microphone. ? “Oi, Banagher! If you hear me, answer back!!” he shouted, and tilted his ears over to the wireless communicator, only hearing noise. There was still no response. The “Unicorn Gundam” was clearly moving closer to the “Garencieres”. The psycoframe on the machine was glowing amidst the storm of plasma, and inexplicably, that light remained in everyone’s eyes, not moving away for a long time.

The “Unicorn Gundam” looked it detected the intention as it matched the relative speed of the “Garencieres” before gliding behind neatly behind the ship. It hid inside the shock cone of the “Garencieres” and brought itself nearer to the bow; once positioned itself above the bridge, the relative velocity between them was completely negated. The head of the “Unicorn Gundam” that resembled a human face

peeked through the bridge window, and the camera outside the ship was capturing a visual of its glowing eyes.

It was an icy cold stare, and those eyes were staring at Zinnerman and company coldly as if it was grading the people inside the ship—

“Is that thing…moving by itself?”

The eyes narrow, and it looked like they were smiling, not because the heat outside the ship caused the air to vibrate. Zinnerman inadvertently gulped, and an impact rocked through the ship and reached the bridge, causing him to be bumped up from the captain’s seat.

The hands of the “Unicorn Gundam” touched the upper deck, and the ship felt this weight as it tilted greatly to once side. The alarm rang, and the bow of the “Garencieres” that was lowered increased its rate of descent. Zinnerman did not have time to shout out as his back hit the ceiling, and he tumbled onto the floor. From the corner of his eyes, he saw that the “Gundam” above him was narrowing its eyes in a smile with its back against the plasma glow. The machine with the appearance of a white devil was definitely smiling, and its body was swaying amidst the vortex that swelled like a mirage.

Part 20[edit]

Tink. Mineva sensed a certain clear sound ringing in the air, and lifted her head.

It was a shooting star, drawing a short trajectory as it passed through the starry sky. The starry sky in front of her eyes looked like it could be reached, and that shooting stare looked like it fell from there. Its glow caused Mineva to feel an inexplicable sense in her chest. She put her hand on her heart that started pounding out of a sudden, and stared at the bright stars. The panic that was full of premonition lost its shape, and all that resided in her chest was a sense of helplessness.

The wind was blowing, and the branches of the trees in the courtyard swayed with the wind. The sound of the helicopter could be heard from afar along with the wind, but it still did not match the sounds of the insects chirping at night. The presence of the security guards surrounding the place had merged into the darkness, and the Marcenas residence showing its peaceful face to the starry sky. Would the dinner party continue? This cottage felt like it was surrounded by a peacefulness of another world as compared to the dining hall. She looked up at the flora that was rustling due to the night wind, felt a little cold and reached her hand to cover her bare shoulder.

Her hand touched the skin, and she recalled another person's warmth she felt approximately an hour ago, which caused her chest to ache. It was the warmth Riddhe Marcenas spread to her when he suddenly embraced her without warning. After that, Riddhe did not look at her again as he ran away from this cottage. *Why was he crying? What is he doing now?* Such unclear thoughts of doubts entered her mind, *What exactly am I doing?* she asked herself honestly, but could not get a clear answer, and she bit her lips.

Mineva was surprised. She never had such doubts when she snuck onto the "Garencieres" or intruded upon "Industrial 7". She knew very well what she was doing when she left the "Nahel Argama" with Riddhe and decided to come to Earth. And at this point, she suddenly lost her sense of direction. *What was I doing? What efforts are needed to achieve the aims?* Her usual clear thoughts were shrouded in fog, and she could not immediately think of what the next step was. Things got too complicated, and Mineva muttered to herself in her troubled heart. Perhaps it was because she interacted with too many people in such a short time that her values as a human started to complicate, and that she could not deal with things as easily as before. Her decision making ability, decisiveness and will became dull in face of such complication—and this was basically a fragile mental state. Her position did not allow herself to do this.

She put her hand on the handrail of the cottage, and turned her eyes again to the starry sky. She probably did not feel so troubled when that starlight approached her. At that time, her driving force was the heat rising in her, and she could take action before she felt fear or troubled. That burning sensation boiling from within did radiate from the hand of the boy she met on "Industrial 7", a burning sensation resonating within them. However, she could not feel this heat now. The feeling left behind from embrace she felt numbed her body, and it blurred the memory of the touch of that hand. *Is that what you have to do, or what you want to do?* — she answered this question with a firm voice, and came down to Earth.

Banagher, what should I do…? Mineva was standing alone in the cottage, and as she had these words that were stuck within her heart, she felt like this was not something she would say. She felt the slightly chilly night wind rob her of her body warmth, and looked over at the cluster of stars on the distance of the atmosphere. Another shooting star glided through the night sky with a cold hard trail of light, leaving an instant of light in Mineva's eyes.

Volume 6 – In the Depths of the Gravity Well

Chapter 1[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The voice that was heard from the headphone sounded like water flowing under the floor. *Swoosh, kok kok*, such irregular sounds seemed similar to the sounds that would be made when changing water pipes.

"…I don't know."

The sonar operator opened his closed eyes and took off the headphones from his ears. The two on-duty crewmen beside him looked over at the sonar panel to check that all the functions were working properly, and then put their headphones back onto the console hook. The dim lighting of the sonar room showed the wry faces of shrugs, and Adi, who sat on the duty officer chair, felt a sense of despair.

The 42-year-old sonar operator was relatively experienced even amongst the highly experienced NCOs. When Adi was still a toddler learning how to walk, the sonar operator had already got onto the submarine. In terms of reading sonar, there was no doubt that the sonar operator was Adi's senior, but he lacked sensibility. The sonar operator was used to not using his imagination, and kept following the conclusion made by the sonar receiver. However, no matter how advanced technology was, a submarine crew member required instinctive intuition and the ingenuity of a craftsman.

“This is the sound detected by the passive sonar 30 minutes ago. It really did not feel like the wavelength of a jet engine, and the sound does seem to flicker from time to time.

Of course, it was impossible for a rookie sonar operator who just got assigned here half a year ago to criticize him face to face. Adi put the sampling number of the audio record into the analyzing monitor, and cautiously said,

“However, there is a regular rhythm in the sound we received. This really doesn’t sound like an underground volcano activity. Some submarines amongst the old nuclear submarines would let out such sounds. If we can compare it with HQ’s database…”

The analyzing monitor showed uneven waveforms. Despite the ship database showing a lack of match, there was no guarantee that this was not a sound from the propulsion system of a submarine. At this point, the screw propellers would only be used when navigating on the water surface, and when submerged, the fusion water jet engine that produced less noise would be used. However, a noiseless propeller system technology had already been the subject of research ever since the old centuries, when USA and the Soviet Union were in the midst of their cold war. The sound displayed on the curve was similar in some extents the early silent propulsion system.

Adi probably would have viewed this as a noise created by natural phenomenon if he had not found past records in the library of the submarine school. He continued to increase the intensity level of the sound analyzing monitor, but the sonar operator gave him a sighing voice, “I say, Adi…”

“It’s a good thing to be passionate about your research, and I admit that your ears are very sensitive. However, this isn’t a group activity a student’s doing here. Is it possible for a nuclear submarine in the old times to appear here? It’s true that some certain old century submarines are still in service, but their facilities are already upgraded. Do you feel that anyone will still use those antiques that are shelved outside the ship’s database.”

The sonar operator stood up, got behind the duty crew member, and put his hand on his fat waist. He, who had maintained a nice slim figure when he was young, finally succumbed to the biggest enemy of a submarine crew member, a lack of exercise. What was worse was that the food provided in submarines were the best in the army.

“Listen up, we’re looking for a spaceship here, a spaceship of those Zeon remnants who pulled off this one heck of an acrobatic and fell

into the Atlantic Ocean. They definitely injected water inside the ship and submerged underwater. It's impossible for that ship to make the noise of a water jet engine, and it's definitely more impossible to make the sound an ancient nuclear engine. You'll just hear the sound of the ship hull being compressed because of this unexpected submersion, and that should be what you're looking for. The navy isn't giving you expensive equipment just to satisfy your own interests.

The words that pressed down on Adi's head caused him to feel that it was no different from the water pressure pressing down on the ship body. He lowered his dejected face, "Yes" and put on the headphones again. The sonar operator snorted, pulled his stomach in and passed behind the duty crew member to leave the sonar room that could be said to be as cramped as a can of sardines.

The curtain rail that was used as a separation was pulled aside, and the air came flowing into the sonar room from the neighboring command room. Unlike the cramped sonar room, the command room that was 10m wide would often have 10 important crew members ranked below the captain working there. To the Earth Federation Submarine EFS "Bonefish", this block was basically functioning as a brain. The sonar room that was connected directly to it had to use the sonar sensors equipped inside the ship to act as the ears as far as possible, and report the situation around the ship to the central command. All duties were handled mechanically in rhythm in this 200m long Juneau-class submarine, and this was one of the organs supporting it.

At this point, the submarine was 300m in depth. It was moving at 10 knots per hour as it moved between the African continent and the South American continent. The Atlantic Ocean below the equator continued to search below the wide ocean space approximately 50m below. This belt of mountains underwater in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean was called the Romansh fault zone. As the young crust formed here had some magnetic minerals, it was very difficult for the sonar sensor to detect. If the Neo Zeon spaceship wanted to hide, this would be the most suitable space. The precipitous reefs around the fault were also in the way of the search, but it was imaginable that the enemy would not submerge too deep. Even if they have similar air capacity, the pressure resistance specifications of a spaceship would still be far inferior to a submarine. If they wanted to sink deeper, they would be crushed by the water pressure before their allied forces came to save them.

No, basically, it was worth doubting whether there were forces on Earth that could be considered their ally. It had been three days since

they started the search, and the underwater search monitor only showed signs of reefs, and the source of this sound that was detected was the allied ship that was carrying out the search at the same time. The mood in this submarine that was under the normal marine department felt as relaxing as naval training, and the crew all forgot about the tension they had when they started launching. Adi felt that he was quickly losing interest in the source of this unknown sound as he sighed. Beside him, Corporal Genon heard him out and said, “Don’t think too much about it.”

“The sonar operator is an athletic type who became famous for football, so he can’t get along with an academic-based man like you.”

Genon took down the headphones on his ears as he smiled, “But I do feel that it’s not an ancient nuclear submarine as well. There’s no response on the sound screen anyway, so I think you probably heard the sigh of a “Sea Ghost”.”

“A sea ghost?”

“it’s just a rumor. About half a month ago, the SOSUS detected an unknown sound at the Atlantic control branch. At that time, they were wondering if there was a system malfunction…”

The so-called SOSUS was a defense system spread throughout all oceans in the world by using the sonar receptor embedded at the seabed. This system was particularly concentrated at the ports of several constituent countries, and it was not a laughable affair when the SOSUS of the Atlantic near the Federation government capital, Dakar malfunctioned. “Why doesn’t this news get reported?” Adi pointed out.

“Because the system is just titular decorations after the Zeon remnants navy got dispersed. They’re scared that the budget will be cut if they reported this malfunction.”

“Is that so…”

“It seemed that the people from my dad’s time even had a fierce fight with Zeon’s “Mad Anglers”, but currently, it’s impossible for the diving fleet to meet actual battle anyway. Even our “Bonefish” is an old granny of 17 ship years. The navy would have been toast together with the army if not for the consideration of unemployment. In this age, the reason why everyone can live is all because of the space forces.”

“Then why did you join the army?”

“To obey my parents. If the son isn’t serving in the army, the retired

officer living off pension will be sent to space. At their age, I don't want to send them to live in the colony. Aren't you the same?"

As Genon glanced over at him, "I…" Abi could only mumble as he turned to look at the sonar board. Adi's father was a NCO in the navy, and without that relationship, there was no way he could have entered the army. Deep inside his heart, he did think that he could continue to remain on Earth as long as he stayed in the navy, but he did not choose to join the navy simply because of self-preservation. He simply loved ships, not the ships flying around in space, but a real ship that moved on the sea.

Due to his father's occupation, he was often near a base in his youth. Perhaps it was because of this that he loved the sea ever since he was young. Adi always respected his father, who was awarded a shiny dolphin mark that was hung in front of his chest, and the bedtime stories that were told when he was young left him longing for the sea. The singing of the whales that could be detected from the sonar, the beauty of the sea surface at sunset, the mobile suits of Zeon that looked like Krakens', and the suffocating intense battles against enemy submarines—especially at the end of the One Year War, where the great naval battle near the coast of Jaburo, the old headquarters of the Federation army, took place. Adi kept begging his father to keep talking about that story, and he did not know how many times he heard it.

When he was young, Adi hoped to enter the navy when he was young and board a submarine. Despite him becoming distant from his father in his youth like ordinary people, he never lost sight of this aim. He successfully entered naval cadet academy, got more points than what was required to graduate through extra-curriculum studying, and was given the right to be assigned to the "Bonefish", considered the newest submarine even as the naval fleet's equipment were stagnated. It was of the same class of submarine as the one Adi's father rode on in the War, both Juneau-class ship and Adi definitely understood its structure and capabilities as well as the captain. He enthusiastically embarked on his first voyage, but the seas after the war was different from what his father said. It was not a place of adventure.

After two Neo Zeon wars, the Zeon remnants left on Earth were basically swept, and the ones were merely some sporadic terrorist attacks from guerilla forces. Earth did not experience a real large scale war for 5 years. Despite the Neo Zeon forces that were derogatorily called "Sleeves", the uprisings normally happened in space, and it was completely unrelated to the navy, especially the diving fleet that would only remain underwater.

“I heard that the battle before caused the relic of “Laplace” to be wrecked.”

Genon changed the topic. Adi remembered seeing the debris of that official residence in low orbit through the window when he went on a space camp in primary school. He added on, “Looks that way.”

“They said that the Neo Zeon ship crashed into Earth together with the relic there…those *aliens* were really persistent.”

Genon gave a wry look as he put the headphone back on to end this idle chat time. *That’s right, those aliens have come to our territory.* Adi thought about that again as he held onto the headphone tightly. *The space forces did not know about the seas, so if a commotion in space is dragged to the sea, we’re the only ones who can respond.* Adi mused in his head as he looked back to inspect on the various functions on the console.

He inspected the underwater search monitor that could recreate the situation at the seabed through CG and the sound screen that showed the shape of the target through the active sonar reflected off the bottom of the sea. The main sonars that were installed on the bow and the sides, separated equally, could block off all excessive sounds and concentrate the detected sounds inside the head phones. The excessive sounds here would refer to the machine sounds from the “Bonefish” itself and the fusion water jet engines installed on both sides letting out sounds of sea water being stirred.

The air pressure from Earth to space would actually go from one to zero, but in water, the water pressure would increase according to the depth. Considering that the place was not suited for humans to live in, a seabed of 300m was an isolated zone like space. Even if the enemy spaceship sank into the bottom of the ocean, it was not easy to save it. However, there was a chance that the Zeon remnants had a submarine for rescue. Adi closed his eyes, put his elbow on the console and paid whole attention to listen out for the sound. He pricked his ears upon hearing the water flow that sounded like it was shaking an old pipe, and wanted to identify the enemy presence that was submerged underwater.

The area around the submarine was darkness, where light could not return. If there were windows, it was possible that they would be seeing darkness that was darker than space. Above this place was the ocean surface, sky and space where there were tens of billions living there. *What kind of people do the people living in the colonies see us as?* Adi gave a wry smile as he suddenly thought about him. He, who remained on Earth, stayed in a large metal tube that was moving at the

bottom of the sea. It seemed that the people who moved to the space colonies called Earth as a gravity well, so people like him probably drew the short stick of the gravity well by staying over here—

Gonk! At this moment, the blunt sound of metal knocking into each other rang in Adi's ears.

The hand that was pressed on the headphone immediately tightened up, and he looked over at Genon beside him. It seemed that the other man heard the same sound too. Adi turned his pale face, worked on the console, pulled out the problematic sounds, corrected them, and stared at the round screen of the sonar radar. Soon, the screen showed an orange light, and a sound beeping alarm rang as it entered Adi's ears.

There were no matches. It was impossible to detect the propeller noises, but something was approaching gradually from the starboard. The distance was less than 1,000 meters, and an unknown metallic sound continued to ring. Adi only called about taking up the wireless communicator microphone in the ship as he yelled, "COMMAND, THIS IS THE SONAR!"

"Sonar detected, position 132. Target speed estimated at 30 knots."

The metallic sound that had a mysterious rhythm to it did not stop. As Adi and Genon were carrying out their own identifications, the voices of the captain and the sonar operator rang inside the sonar room. The captain looked skinnier as compared to the sonar operator, and he looked less lively as before due to a recent gastric ulcer surgery. However, to a marine, the captain was still a respected figure, "What do you think that is?" Adi saw the captain lower his head to stare at him, and tensed up as he answered,

"I don't know. This sounds different from a torpedo tube being opened, but it still does sound metallic. I'm guessing that it's a machine running…most likely, the sound of an actuator running."

Adi finished, and he himself felt that this was the case. This deep ringing sound that persisted on did seem similar to a crane or a similarly large machine. The sonar operator said, "This guy's a rookie, but his ears are sharp." The captain put the standby headphones over his ears and put his mouth to the nearby wireless communicator microphone. "Command, this is the captain speaking. Get the torpedo crew to position. Head east and prepare room for vessel operations. Increase speed by 10."

Ting, ding. The speed indicator rang, and as the submarine sped up as

it changed its course, the inertia that was caused started to act on the bodies. The sonar operator put his hands on Adi's to support himself, and it seemed that he was praising the rookie for responding quickly. The competing sense of delight and tension rose in him as he looked tense while operating on the console, "Target's increasing in speed!" but was shocked by Genon's called.

"Distance at 800. Coming right at us!"

The flickering on the radar was quickly approaching the circle. It went passed 40 knots, the fastest speed a Juneau-class could move in water. The captain with an obvious black-ethnic blood immediately turned pale and commanded to the wireless communicator. "Command, increase speed by 10 again. Go full throttle." At the same time, the sonar operator yelled "Hit the piner!" and Adi immediately pressed the active sonar on the console.

*KONG!*A shrill sound spread through the speakers, rocking the ship body of the "Bonefish". The reflected waves bounced through the machine 4 times faster than it was in air, and the target silhouette appeared on the sound screen. One could feel that everyone present gasped.

As both sides were basically maintaining the same height, the shape of that thing was definitely how it looked from the front. However, the target's silhouette was extremely abnormal. It was shaped like a flat rhombus, its longest length was 80m long, and its height was more than 30m tall. Looking at its shape, it was most definitely not a submarine, or rather, it was far from an ideal submarine. Also, the target was changing shapes from time to time as it approached the submarine underwater at a high speed.

“Is that the sea ghost…?”

The captain mused. The object continued to approach with its propeller system still silent, charging right at the starboard of the “Bonefish” that turned back. *It doesn’t have a fusion water jet engine, so why it is able to move so freely in the sea?* Adi’s mind went blank as the sonar operator pushed him aside to work on the sonar board. “60! It’ll crash into us directly!” he warned. “Emergency evasion…” the captain ordered in the wireless communicator, “Too late!” but Genon yelled louder as the sudden feeling of death that came caused Adi’s body to stiffen.

I’ll die in such a place. I haven’t done anything yet. I’m not as active as dad, and I never experienced such adventures. The sunsets, whale songs, everything, I haven’t experienced—

“IMPACT!”

The captain’s voice that sounded like a scream rang in the ears. Then, the sound of metal being ripped echoed through the ship, and Adi was

thrown off the ship.

Genon too was knocked aside, and the captain and sonar operator had their backs crashed into the wall. The alarm rang, the lights were flickering, and Adi heard the sound of the ship being crushed. A large amount of seawater was rushing in through the ripped shape, and the hull where up and down could not be identified continued to sink. The sea ghost that bared its sea monster-like fangs gnawed the entire submarine to shreds—and Adi's consciousness faded as he swallowed the fear his father never experienced.

Part 2[edit]

The 'claw' that penetrated through the rubber-like sound-absorbing material cut a hole through the belly of the submarine and pulled it out.

The high pressure of air inside the ballast tanks spurted out of the crack, and the "Bonefish" was surrounded by the forceful air bubbles. The seawater replaced the air as it flowed in, tilting the submarine to the right, and the buoyancy was completely negated as the "Bonefish" sank to the bottom of the sea. The hull hit the seabed violently, and before the dust of the reefs being scattered spread in the sea, the object nicknamed the sea ghost started to float slowly.

The unit had 3 sharp claws on its pair of arms—or rather, forelegs, and they bend back with the sound of the actuator ringing. The part that was installed at the base of the arms were arched shaped armor that looked like shells, and from the front, its silhouette looked like a flattened rhombus, but it was merely a small part of this complicated model. The gigantic arms and narrow streamlined body made its mechanical silhouette look like a crustacean residing in the sea, while the rear end of the body looked like a hermit crab that was much larger in volume than the body. Looking down from above, its front end had the form of a spade, and it was reminiscent of a raptor. The part that looked like a head had a crack on it, and one could see a brightly glowing 'eye' inside.

The mono-eye sensor that was first developed by the old Principality of Zeon flickered, and the air bubbles carried its back that was giving off air bubbles as it started to leave the bottom of the seabed that was in eternal darkness. Its arms turned behind, overlapping with the armor on its shoulders, and changed its form. The arms turned behind, shelved in with the shoulders armors. It changed its form to become a completely streamlined body, but the form itself showed no sense of submersion at all. It was possible to find such machines that were shaped like monsters in this Minovsky Particle era of weapons, weapons that were half similar to a mobile suit—mobile armors. The

AMA-X7 “Shamblo” flipped over its large body that looked like a kraken as it moved amidst the high pressure of the deep sea. The Magneto Hydro Dynamics (MHD) units installed within its shoulder armor continued to let out a different noise from the fusion water jet engine as it changed its course horizontally at a depth of around 100m.

Unlike mobile suits that were fixed to be humanoid mobile weapons, mobile armors were not fixed in shape. As long as it could satisfy its original purpose, the size of it did not matter, and the limbs that controlled the unit’s mobility need not be limited to limbs alone. The “Shamblo” itself was no exception, and in fact, it looked like a submarine that had arms for combat, but the unique trait was that only a few pilots were needed to operate this, unlike a submarine that required many people. There was a cockpit block with a linear structure in the middle of this unit that could be considered a motor fortress—and over there, one could see Mahdi Garvey seated on the captain seat, looking down at the CG corrected seabed image.

There was a wide space akin to that of a shuttle control room in this cockpit, and there was a wall of screen right at the front. There were three operating seats in front of the screen, one to operate, one to detect, and one to defend. The captain’s seat controlled the attacks, and there was a very large and high space behind the cockpit. Of course, the captain’s seat could control everything in this system when things were critical.

The screen replicated the scenes in the sea through the combined information obtained from the nightvision cameras and the sonar, and the enemy submarine that was sunk was giving of air bubbles and floating materials that scattered everyone. Walid and Abbas, 2 young men that were old enough to have beards, were seated on the operating and detection seats respectively as they stared at that scene. The only female, Loni was seated on the defense seat as she continued to stare at the screen. Mahdi saw that her delicate shoulders were tensed up, “Are you scared, Loni?” and asked her from the behind the console of the captain’s seat. The light brown face covered by the helmet visor turned around, “Yes, father.” and Loni’s black eyes looked anxious as she answered.

“That’s good. Those who aren’t willing to show emotions will not be able to handle things coolly when something unexpected happens. Abbas, Walid, watch carefully too. We just killed more than 200 enemies. There’ll be more bloodshed after this, so don’t you look away from the corpses of the enemies.

“Yes.” Abbas and Walid answered in unison as they stared at the

blood and entrails. As according to customs that lasted since ancient times, Madhi had many wives and many concubines, and the 3 people in front of him at this point had the purest of bloodline in the Garvey family. Madhi really wanted to let his deceased father, who was unable to see the faces of his grandchildren, everything, including the first results of the “Shamblo”. Fear and excitement continued to make him feel this way originally, but he immediately changed his mind soon. He thought about how it would not be long before he meets his father, and his beard that had some white hairs in it curled up above his mouth.

It had been more than 6 years since he inherited the inheritance from the First Neo Zeon war and started to build this “Shamblo”. Looking at the remnants of the submarine that sank in front of their eyes, the Earth Federation army would know that the sea ghost was not a mere illusion. Those people would understand immediately that this so-called thing would create a more direct threat to them. The dormant period had ended, and the time to take action had finally arrived. After the several battles in space, the “Box” fell onto Earth—and they were fighting for this “Box” that could topple the Federation government.

However, it was still unknown where the Neo Zeon ship that had the “Box” went. It had been 3 days since they received the report, and Madhi searched around the ocean where they could have possibly crashed into, but there were still no results. He turned his eyes on the seabed search monitor that showed the bits of the enemy submarine that were swimming about. Abbas, who was seated on the central control seat, said, “The “Sleeves” Heavy Lift Vehicles will fall onto Earth immediately, and interrupted with a steady voice befitting that of the eldest son.

“I heard that the “Garencieres” entered the atmosphere in the middle of battle. Is it possible that it broke up in air or split into pieces when it landed in the water?”

“Zinnerman won’t make that mistake. But it’s possible that they went slightly off course and was forced to land in the desert…”

He met the captain of this cargo ship in question, Suberoa Zinnerman once. They had different beliefs, and Madhi felt that the other man was a warrior, but in the end, he felt that the simple truth was that the fate of humans was in God’s hands. The time that was set at Greenwich Standard indicated 6:40 am. After checking the time, Madhi checked the time it would take to reach the HLV reclamation point, decided that it was time to pack up, and lifted his head from the console.

“Can’t be helped. We’ll pause our search for the “Garencieres” for the time being. New course, position 020. Let’s go retake the “Sleeves”

HLV."

His three children repeated this command as they worked on their respective consoles. The MHDs propellers on the shoulders absorbed seawater, and the large body of the "Shamblo" tilted slightly.

The slits on the shoulders took in seawater, and the powerful magnetic field created by the superconductive coil triggered the tube-shaped propellers that would absorb seawater and shoot it backwards in an accelerated manner. The MHD was the earliest system that was developed amongst the silent propulsion systems, but it was soon forgotten because of the similarly silent fusion water jet engines that were becoming commonplace as it lacked output. For a large mobile armor like the "Shamblo" that completely abandoned hydromechanics with its exterior, this was still insufficient, and there was a completely different engine in it.

The machine that was like a large ray quickly spun rode on the water flow raised by the MHD propulsion system, and tilted its slanted position back horizontally. The Minovsky particle spaceship engines that were hidden inside the arms were installations used when a spaceship moved under gravity. It could scatter Minovsky particles regularly and create I-fields to let the object float. The engines the "Shamblo" had were considered amongst the newest amongst the Minovsky era crafts that were becoming smaller, and the seawater that was ionized by the I-field would become the 'protective layer', greatly reducing the resistance when diving in the water. This was the result from the Neo Zeon development plans and the Garvey Enterprises developing this. In fact, the expenses for producing a "Shamblo" alone was enough to build a solar generator that could power three basic industries.

However, this was worth it. The "Shamblo" that obtained the power of the Minovsky Craft system would show its real value once it landed. He sat in this cockpit that would not shake, checked that the functions of the "Shamblo" were perfect, and said as if he was muttering to himself, "In the worst case scenario, even if we can't find the "Garencieres", there will still be a way."

"Things are moving. The fact that Full Frontal, who remained completely silent before this is hurriedly sending reinforcements over here is the best proof. Also, with this "Shamblo", I can look forward to settling the hundred years of grudge as a "descendant of Dubai"…"

Loni merely moved her head slightly as the three children did not say anything. They bore the tragic fate of their race and the power to topple the current situation. Madhi stared at the backs of the trio and

looked over at the sea surface that was rippling 100m above. The CG corrected screen showed the sea surface, radiating with what he believed to be a Holy light, indicating for sure that Allah existed, and seemed to be blessing the “Shamblo” that managed to succeed in its first battle.

The large body of the “Shamblo” continued to move in the water as it shook the Neo Zeon medal that was a mere formality. The weak propulsion sound was not detected by the sonar’s eyes as the machine disappeared deep within the veil of the thick seawater.

Part 3[edit]

“It sank?”

Ronan Marcenas could not help but parrot the other person’s words as he lifted his head from the documents he read halfway. “Yes.” Patrick answered as he put the readied information onto the table.

“Vice Admiral Ted privately contacted us. The rescue team is currently sent to the water site, but the chances of the crew surviving are despairingly slim…”

It seemed that Patrick’s words tailed off weakly not just because he was feeling compassionate about the submarine that was sunk. Ever since the Neo Zeon ship that took in the “Unicorn” dropped onto Earth, Patrick had been busy running around the area where he was contesting for elections, and had to become the relay man between the Senate Council that included Ronan, and the Central Intelligence Branch. Ronan looked away from his anxious looking son-in-law as he picked up the information that had the works for internal use and quickly browsed through it.

The EFS “Bonefish” last sent a distress signal at the Atlantic Ocean, and lost signal after that. It was not hard to imagine that the military vessel that went to search for a Neo Zeon ship made contact with a Zeon remnant that was looking for the same target, and was sunk before it could fight back. Ronan looked at the crew list that had no purpose other than to act as a list of names, and muttered deep within his heart, *Are these martyrs for the “Box”?* He then took off his reading glasses and put aside the stacked information. *This is retribution for dealing with the unemployment issue so carelessly, huh?”, he mused as he turned his chair to the window behind him. The office that retained light extremely well in this residence was basked in the midst of the scorching afternoon sunlight.*

“The Minovsky particles jamming the sensors aren’t the cause of this

incident. After the war ended, the reason why no one went to repair the surveillance network destroyed by Zeon was because people wanted to leave the surveillance job to the Earth military. That's why it's so troublesome to search for a ship that dropped onto Earth. Even if the remnant army managed to build up their forces, the current situation is such that the military is unable to grasp information about them. There's no need to let people waste their lives like this if the surveillance satellites of the same level as before the war are still functioning in the first place…"

Patrick showed neither affirmation nor negation as he turned his face to Ronan. It was no wonder, as Ronan's era was the one that established this system, while his era would be the one forced to pay the price. Ronan rubbed his eyes and held his sigh in forcefully as he looked back at Patrick with an appropriate look to his first secretary, and said, "Then, how are things proceeding?" Patrick took out the other information tucked under his armpit and spoke,

"I sieved through the namelist the vice-admiral handed over. This one should be most suitable."

Ronan put on his glasses as he glanced at the information with the data. "Commander of Londo Bell, Captain Bright Noa…" he read as he looked up at Patrick, "So he came down to Earth?"

"He rode on the "Ra Cailum" to the Far East in order to test the newly equipped Minovsky Craft. This man is a commander, but he is also acting as a captain at the same time. I suppose it's because he is a man who's born to be on a ship, and I do find him a serious and upright person."

"This man is stubborn. You've at least heard of his name, right?"

"Of course. To a young man like me, he's a hero in the past anyway. I was engrossed when I read about the "Battle records of White Base."

"The legend that time caused misunderstandings about him, and he was excluded from the mainstream military. The higher ups thought that he had thoughts of rebelling…to put it simply, they suspect him as a Newtype. After that, the Senate Council seemed like it had intentions of pulling him out, but he was merely satisfied with acting as commander of Londo Bell from the sidelines. Well, he's not a man suited for politics."

Ronan spoke of what he saw on the surface, "Can you rein him in?" and gave a probing look. Patrick did not avoid his father-in-law's stare as he answered,

“That “Nahel Argama” belongs to Londo Bell. It had been severed from contact with the command of Londo Bell ever since the ship was loaned out to the Senate Council. To a man like Captain Bright, he will be tense over being unable to contact a ship under his command, let alone knowing that the ship is involved with the previous terrorist attacks.”

There’s hope if we go in from there, Ronan felt somewhat chilly in his heart as he saw Patrick’s face indicate this as such. He imagined how this man who was known for his sportsmanship, was gradually being dyed in the color of politics, and felt both reliable and guilty. He took off his reading glasses and gave the other man a serious look, “Is the “Nahel Argama” stuck in its orbit?”

“it’s the doing of the Vist Foundation. The crew on the “Nahel Argama” are directly involved in these incidents. If they come out to testify, the allies supporting the Foundation will be in danger.”

“In other words, if they’re still in the hands of the Senate Council, we have nothing to sue the Foundation with. Also, the Earth military searching the “Sleeves” are under the Foundation’s watch. We need to get a pawn here. This pawn must have a sharp mind and must know how to deal with complicated situations.

Ronan stared over at the photo of Captain Bright which looked resilient and upright, and tapped his index finger on the table. After about 3 seconds, he made his decision and put the stack of information into the drawer, saying, “Help me arrange a meeting with him.”

“Looking at how we can’t survive without the tension of war, the Earth military is more reliant than the space military. The news that Mineva Zabi accepted our protection has probably reached the Foundation’s ears. You have to proceed cautiously.”

“Alright. Meet in Dakar?”

“No, this place is good. Make it quick. I can’t leave Dakar for too long.”

It would take slightly more than 2 hours to fly from Atlanta to Dakar if he rode on the Hypersonice Transport (HST). He could return back immediately if he wanted to, but he did not want to talk about measures to be taken against the “Box” at the Parliament where the reporters would work in shifts and patrol there. He saw his first secretary nod his head, turned around, and wanted to look away, but recalled something as he called out to the other man facing away from him, “Patrick.” The son-in-law seemed like he detected the slight change in tone as he turned his face around and looked over his own

shoulder.

"…Eh, are you still on good terms with Cynthia?"

Ronan sensed that his words at this point seemed hollow as compared to before, but he could not help but continue his words fluently. Cynthia did not know that the person called Audrey Burne was Mineva Zabi herself, and she was completely locked out of the loop in this battle for the Box", but there was no reason why the very instinctive daughter of the Marcenas family would not detect the heinous air inside and outside the family. Ronan did hear from the butler Dwiyon secretly that Cynthia was feeling more and more frustrated with Patrick for being unwilling to say anything, and a cold wind was blowing amidst their relationship.

Patrick showed a somewhat unexpected look, "Please don't worry." and answered as he relaxed his mouth. That delicate smile showed a concern for the father-in-law, and also looked like it was teasing a man who was clumsy when it came to domestic affairs.

"She is becoming a little nervous, but she is an adult. It seems that she's getting along well with Miss Mineva…Audrey too."

"Really?"

"But please find a chance to explain to her. She's a member of the Marcenas' family after all."

I'm just an outsider after all these words that came out of left field entered Ronan's unprepared heart, and Patrick left the office. This would be the fate of a man who did not care about his family, doing something he was not used to doing. He endured the pain that crept into his chest, pushed back the leather chair and got up. He stood at the window and looked at the courtyard where the sun shone down on.

The Dogwood trees that surrounded the residence were growing light pink flowers. The Late April of Southern USA accepted summer faster than the Northern Hemisphere. The greenness got thicker, and Ronan, who was fascinated by this scene under the shining sun, heard the sound of the horse galloping far away , and looked over there. He saw the horse rushing through the Dogwood.

He recognized that the hands holding onto the reins belonged to Riddhe, who had his legs tucked tightly around the horse's abdomen, and he lowered himself such that his chest nearly touched the horse's neck. The face that became one with the horse appeared and vanished between the gaps of the trees. He critiqued the school's British horse-riding the school taught as boring, learnt Western horse-

riding on his own, and did not look elegant at this point. He looked very different from the high class people, and was racing as if he wanted to be primitive like the horse, but his flowing blond hair was so beautiful it throbbed in Ronan's heart, who watched his son ride on the horse until he disappeared. His hair color looked like golden flames that were bursting with all sorts of emotions in his heart—

However, there was a tinge of dark shadow on his back. He managed to remain oblivious to the truth until a few days ago, but after knowing how fragile the base supporting this world was, he looked like he was racing on the horse while trying to shake off the shadow on him. But no matter how he dashed, those things could not be shaken away. Whether it was the truth about the "Laplace Box" or the destiny that await the Marcenas family, Riddhe could only view them as part of him and try to accept it as he continued. Ronan sighed deeply as he turned his back against the window. He could not shake off the galloping sound he once heard as it remained in his extremely unhappy body.

Part 4[edit]

She heard before that there were no animals that were more sensitive to human emotions than horses. If the person on the saddle was filled with vigor, the horse would be willing to listen to the command; if the rider showed any fear, the horse would look down on the rider. It seemed that the horse could detect even a bluff as it would suddenly stop and move at times and do disobedient things to the rider. As its appearance showed, a horse was probably a very proud living creature.

At this point, this horse that was racing definitely understood its rider's feelings. This Anglo Arabic horse let its pitch black mane sway as it ran around the outskirts of the wide courtyard, seemingly becoming one with Riddhe Marcenas. Even if someone stood on the terrace and looked down, that person could sense how the duo became one, and Mineva Zabi felt amazed by this. That horse looked like it really trusted Riddhe, or it would not be racing so quickly like that.

However, it was a little saddening to see it like that. The rider looked like he wanted to vent all the frustrations he accumulated for a long time as he was forced to pick up the reins, and the horse that felt its rider's emotions looked somewhat fearful. The rider wanted to run away from something he could not shake off no matter what he did, and the horse looked like it was racing with fire burning on it…*would its feet not be burned if it raced like that?*

As Mineva thought, she subconsciously thought of poking her body out from the parapet of the terrace, and sensed someone behind her. Cynthia Marcenas appeared as she stood at the glass door that was

pushed aside, and she met Mineva in the eyes as she said, “Its name is Pligrim, a horse Riddhe’s been taking care for a while.” She showed a smile that had no other intention as she strolled over while her blond hair fluttered. Mineva felt somewhat guilty in her heart as she avoided the stare of the other person.

“It’s not a horse that’s easy to tame, but for some reason, it’s extremely close to Riddhe. If I want to ride on it, it’ll definitely look away first. However, it’s been 3 years since that child left the house.”

Cynthia stood beside her and looked over, “How about you try to ride on it?” it was obvious from her stare that she was trying to test. “No thanks…” Mineva answered as she looked back at the courtyard.

Mineva remembered that when she was young, during the time when the Neo Zeon space fortress “Axis” was still around, she had some beginner lessons on horse riding at a colony somewhere. It was too awkward to see the regent and her people look at her worriedly, and she once rode on a horse and sprinted off without listening to advice. However, she did not think that she could ride on that horse in her current state of mind. Even if she asked Riddhe to help her hold the reins, it would only bother the horse that would be carrying 2 people. Cynthia looked down at Riddhe that was riding on the horse, “He’s really a useless child.” She sighed as she mused, and Mineva did not feel comfortable hearing this.

“He’s always been like this in the past, always unable to hide what he was thinking, and never cared about the people around him when he put his mind to him. He’s already everywhere at once, but he’s attracted to small details for some reason, so he’ll always bear everything by himself alone.”

This is really a rather accurate correct analysis. Mineva felt impressed that Riddhe’s relative was able to see through him so thoroughly, but felt a little depressed as she thought about how she had not been talking to Riddhe during this while, and looked away to the sky.

It had been 3 days since the time she first stayed at the Marcenas’ residence. Riddhe was often not home as he had to deal with the repairs of the “Delta Plus” that was left at base and other things, so she did not have the chance to talk to him, while Ronan and Patrick would constantly avoid her. The ones who would meet her were Cynthia and Dwiyon, and it was obvious that the men with status were unwilling to meet her. Cynthia too detected this unnatural atmosphere —but to her, the girl should be the source of this strange phenomenon. Mineva thought about this, felt that the sunlight that could shine in her became uncomfortable, and lowered her face.

I just want to leave this place, she thought. *I can't do anything even if I stay here. Will I merely be imprisoned here as Audrey Burne and become a diplomatic card to be used in the future? Or will I feel the unknown attraction on my skin just like that night we had the party…*

"Our family is like this, so it's kind of hard to relax…but I hope that you'll watch over Riddhe. I suppose that guy will recover to who he is normally after a while."

Mineva's shoulder that was touched shuddered slightly, and she recovered from her thoughts. Cynthia showed an understanding smile of one of the same gender before leaving the terrace. *So being attentive to small details is a trait in the family? She watched the back profile of the calm and carefree adult leave as she felt miserable and grateful, muttering inside her heart that it would be great if that were really the case. However, Cynthia's guess would most likely be wrong, as her view about anomaly in Riddhe's heart being a one-time change was just a hopeful expectation. He, who was gradually changing, was suffering over it. It was because Mineva was an outsider who need not be responsible for this—or rather, she was the one who bore his emotions that flowed—that she was able to see the change in Riddhe most clearly.*

But at this point, Mineva could not tell what kind of emotions Riddhe was experiencing. She sighed and looked up at the blue sky where the clouds were gathered. She heard from the news that there seemed to be a battle in low orbit on the other end of the sky. *If that battle triggered the recent commotion, is there a Neo Zeon vessel entering Earth? What's the situation with the "Garencieres" now? What about the "Nahel Argama", "Unicorn" and Banagher?*

She continued to remain in where she was even as events were progressing at every moment. Mineva closed her mouth as she felt anxious and wanted to shout out. Riddhe's shouts as he raced on the horse echoed through the echo, and the galloping filled with his anger vented on the ground passed deep into her body and soul."

Part 5[edit]

The scorching sun continued to light the sky from above as it was so hot it seemed like noises would be made. The sunlight, which should be appropriately called heat rays, shone on a burning hot desert that stretched to a distant horizon.

The temperature was 42 degrees Celsius, and the hot air that blew by combined with the sunlight to rob the dry and hot skin of any moisture it had left. At this point, the sun had risen directly above them, and it

was hard to find anything that could be used as a shade. Suberoa Zinnerman continued to peel the skin that was dry because of the sunburn, and looked up at the sand dune right in front of his eyes. The bow of the ship glittered under the sunlight's reflection, and one could see the "Garencieres" buried under the dune.

"Sure looks like it was buried deep. We'll be able to hide from the eyes of the surveillance satellites, so I suppose you can say that it's good in some way…"

Flaste Schole said this as he reached his hand out to the exterior of the ship, "HOT!" and immediately pulled back his hand. It had been 3 days since they went off their estimated course and landed in Western Sahara of Africa. The result of trying to make the ship land on its belly was that the "Garencieres" ended up sliding in the desert by several kilometers and was dived into the sand dunes. There were two sandstorms after this, and it was buried under the sand. The bow and a part of the broadside lying horizontally were the only parts exposed, while the rear hatch of the aft was buried under several tons of sand. There were 3 main thrusters, and one of them had its nozzle exposed from the dune, but it looked like a mere rock amongst the rocks scattered in the desert. It was very likely that nobody would notice a cargo spaceship buried in the desert unless they analyzed the satellite visuals intently.

Like the rockets that were launched into space, the "Garencieres" landed in a vertical manner under gravity. Once it flipped onto the floor, it was no different from a tortoise with its legs facing up, and had no chance of changing its position on its own, let alone leave the land and fly. Basically, there was no way to move away other than to move this large amount of sand that was piled up, and they only managed to dig out the airlocks through manual labor. It was really impossible to drag out the cargo hangar at the aft of the ship if they lacked the assistance of a large machine. The rear hatch at the belly of this triangular ship was already more than 20m long, and at this point, the sand could only end up piled on it in a slope.

Besides, we're surrounded in all corners. Zinnerman again understood the seriousness of the situation itself as he put the brim of the captain's hat to eye level. Flaste looked over at the exterior of the broadside that was hot enough to cook an egg as he grumbled, "It'll be great if the starboard can face up."

"In that case, we'll be able to use the unloading hatch on the side. We can't do anything now that the hatch at the back is buried in sand. A mobile suit can get out if we shoot a beam from inside…"

“But the “Garencieres” will really meet its end. Let’s just treat it as a final resort.”

Zinnerman lifted his head as he drank the water inside the bottle, unwilling to talk about this topic again. The desert was not a suitable place for discussions, and the sweat that flowed out started to evaporate afterwards. The dust-like fine sand would enter all corners as long as there were openings. It would cause the machines to malfunction and wear people out physically and mentally—Flaste was extremely familiar with the terror and troubles it would bring as he once had to survive in Africa during the One Year War. As all the crew was hiding inside the tilted ship in this bright sunny day, Flaste exposed himself to this scorching weather, and he was definitely recalling his memories that time. *There’s no time to hesitate now. We have to decide if we should go with our last resort.*

He could only see sand, sand and more sand around him. The Sahara Desert that occupied 40 percent of the African continent was 13 million square kilometers in total area, and the largest desert in the world. The average temperature here was above 30 degrees Celsius, and the annual rainfall was less than 200mm. if anyone were to take off their clothes because of the heat, they would be burned red immediately and incur contagious skin diseases. In late April, temperatures could rise to above 40 degrees Celsius, and this place would become an actual burning hell. However, this was a result of the abnormal weather conditions causing global warming to be accelerated after colonies were sent crashing to Earth, prompting the desertification of Earth. Despite all these, one thing that never changed since the old ages was that temperatures would drop drastically after sunset, and at night, there would be icy cold winds that could freeze people to death.

The cruelest thing about this was that this wide open place encouraged people to think that they could walk through a desert if they wanted to. A lot of desert victims were bothered by such mirages as they ended up moving around their point of accident, and finally ended up as dried up corpses in the wilderness. The dunes would move according to the winds, and the desert that would change the landscape as well was an overly cruel world where humans had to survive with their own power. While there was the advantage of not being spotted if they remained here, the chances of them being spotted by their allies would be marginally slim.

Thus, the desert became a hidden nest for Zeon remnants on Earth, and a few guerilla organizations set up base here to this day, but nobody knew how long it would take before they discovered the “Garencieres”. They did report beforehand when they passed through

the atmosphere, but their estimated course was the Atlantic. It would probably be a few days later before they realized that the “Garencieres” went off course and landed in the desert several thousand kilometers away from the estimated point.

The forced landing caused the wireless satellite device to be faulty. The only thing left was the wireless communicator of the mobile suits in the ship, but the range couldn't exceed the horizon. The emergency distress call sender machine was still alright, but it was not practical to try it as they could not guess which side would detect the signal first, the enemies or the allies.

Since this ship had the key to opening the “Laplace Box”, the Federation army would logically search around the area with all its efforts. In contrast, the Zeon remnants who hardly had enough resources probably would not be able to afford a large search party. “It’s almost impossible to repair the wireless satellite device if we don’t swap the entire thing.” Flaste said as he gave a look firmly believing that there was no time to hesitate.

“It’s a good thing that we have ample water and food, but we can’t just stay here all the time. We’ll be detected by the enemy if we don’t contact our side. Tomura just said that he heard the sound of a plane flying above us.”

Flaste looked up at the thing layer of clouds floating in the air, and took a gulp of water. Once they finished their search in the Atlantic Ocean, quite a few surveillance satellites would turn to look at the desert. Zinnerman blew out air from his nose as he answered,

“Looking at the map, we’ll see an oasis if we move 60km to the east. There’s a town called Atal over there, and we should be able to contact with someone over there. We’ll reach there quickly if we ride on a mobile suit.”

“That’s true…”

“Kwani’s unit still needs repairs, but Ivan’s “Geara Zulu” can be used. Even if we have to blow the ship to scraps—”

“You forgot one other machine.”

Zinnerman spoke up to interrupt. *Eh?* Flaste blinked his eyes and immediately gave a recalling look, only to give a wry look as he answered, “We can’t possibly depend on the “Unicorn” here.”

“I let the maintenance crew inspect through, and they said that they can’t remove the pilot’s biometric authentication. The pilot’s like that as

well…”

Flaste pointed his chin at the entry hatch that was approximately 50m away. One could see Banagher Links covered with a sunshade cloth behind the dune piled up at the door, curled up there. Banagher did not detect the stares from Flaste and company as his gloomy-looking face kept staring at the sandy ground of nothingness. It was really hard to determine that he was a living person if nobody said that he was alive, and he was the same as when he was dragged out of the “Unicorn Gundam” cockpit, not seeing anything in his eyes—

He looked like he was fatigued, a common symptom amongst recruits, but the medical officer said that it was not the case after inspection. His mind was overly fatigued, but his body was completely healthy, and he had no problems with his meals and other usual living conditions. However, he had no sense of will to live on by himself, and he would not ingest food if it was not prepared. If he was left alone, he would just sit around blankly for the entire day. It would be more appropriate to describe his symptoms as being very feeble instead of forcing himself not to live, and it was rather similar to those old-aged people that would give up easily. He made himself devoid of all sorts of concerns to seal his heart and soul, and he did not know that he was in a decline. This would be considered a subconscious self-neglect.

There were no effects no matter what they did, whether they tried to threaten him or please him; he would not resist, but he would not show any form of will on his own. He disappeared before they knew it, and would just spend the day spacing out. It had been more than 2 weeks since he was involved in the “Industrial 7” incident, and perhaps the stress that was built up within him during this period had finally reached its breaking point. However, the crew could only feel extremely irked that this brat, who was not even a prisoner, was just wandering around lifelessly even as they were forced to make a decision of life and death. Flaste looked like he felt the same as well as he added with a vexing line, “Such a bother.”

“Even if the “Laplace Program” shows a new coordinate, we can’t make the next move if the “Unicorn” can’t move. We can tie the brat in and let the other mobile suits move it, but the coordinates are a troublesome thing here.”

Flaste took out the paper with the new coordinates from his clutches as he continued to grumble, seemingly feeling that there was no point to look at it any further. Zinnerman did not raise any objections here. A seal of the “Laplace Program” was undone after the activation of the NT-D the last time, but the coordinates given this time felt like a joke. It

was a place that nobody with a weak resolve could enter just like the last time, and in this sense, the hurdle here would not be something the relics of “Laplace” could match. Flaste folded the printed paper into a paper airplane, pinched it with his fingertips, “What’s that and what’s that, really?” and threw it away.

“We keep opening, and we see a new box inside it…are we being fooled by Cardeas Vist here?”

Despite only saying this as a joke, his eyes were filled with intense anger. *Either way, there’s no way Gilboa and the other men who died could rest in peace if they did not find out the truth. Do we wait for aid that might not come here, or do we wreck the ship and find aid* — Zinnerman felt that there was only one option here in his heart as he looked at the direction the paper plane Flaste threw floated to. The plane that did not ride on the wind lost speed after flying for less than 10m, and fell onto the burning hot sand.

Part 6[edit]

The fluttering sound of the paper amidst the sound of the wind moved the eardrums. Banagher Links lifted his head slightly as he looked over at where the sound came from.

It was a paper plane, half buried by the reddish brown sand. The plane got blown by the wind as its wings rustled, and gradually moved out of sight. Banagher had recently seen something similar, the paper plane Tikva once threw in the dusty town in “Palau”… *no, it looked more like a glider.* As he carelessly thought about that, a sharp shock passed through Banagher’s body, and he exerted more strength into his arms that were holding his legs in.

You killed him. You killed Gilboa, Tikva’s father. He had no intention of attacking, and you simply shot him. Tikva’s pitiful for not having a father now. You and him have no fathers. You killed him, and you killed a lot a people—these words passed through his mind in the form of this shock, *You’re the seed of disaster,* overlapping with the words Alberto said, and the body that was curled up in this scorching hot weather cooled off. The weather was so hot, and yet his body felt cold inside. His stomach felt tense, as if someone threw a lead block inside. *What am I doing? Nobody needs me, even I don’t need myself, so why must I stay curled up here?*

The sunshade cloth was draped over his head, and he turned his eyes to the endless desert, but the blue sky that covered the faded land looked dark, perhaps because the sunlight was too bright, distorting his sight. *Why is it that a light source from one point can light*

everything? Banagher, who grew up in colonies, looked up at the inexplicable sun, and then looked at the land of sand right on this unknown planet. *We can just run through this desert,* Banagher thought. *The sunlight can burn the skin, blood my head, dry up all the fluids in my body, and I'll just become dust. Even the lead in my stomach and this cursed family blood of mine will be burnt to nothing. If I can do that, the "Unicorn" will never move again, the "Gundam" won't awaken again; I won't have to kill others, I won't be killed, and the "Laplace Box" will be sealed forever—*

And then what? The abnormally cold voice interrupted to end the delusions. The impulse that rose in Banagher's body quickly wilted as fatigue struck his mind. He found it difficult to think, curled back his body without doing anything and became a stone block like before. *This place is really the bottom of a gravity well,* Banagher admitted. His body and mind were tied to the bottom, so heavy that they were unable to move at all. Space felt so distant, and his soul was the only thing melting from his crouched body that was like dust. *This is a one and only cog that can make decisions on its own. Don't lose it —Mr Daguza did say it. I don't want to lose it, I lost it unwillingly, but I really can't hang on now. If I try to put it on, my body will break apart. I just want to sit here without thinking and without asking for anything. I'll keep sitting until my heart melts completely…*

A shadow crept up to him, and his sights became dark. The ends of the boots that were dirtied by sand appeared in a corner of Banagher's eyes, and he moved his blank eyeballs.

Zinnerman was standing there. His hulking figure was standing there angrily "Stand up." as he growled with a deep voice. Banagher immediately lost interest in the person who arrived, and immediately lowered his sight.

"There's a town 60km away. I'm going to walk there and get help, and you're coming with me."

Are you kidding me? a slight electrical flow passed through Banagher's mind as he lifted his eyes again. He saw the bearded face that was not smiling, and lazily looked down again. At this moment, Zinnerman's hand grabbed him by the torso, and the body, which had its center of gravity at the back, was immediately dragged off the floor.

"How long are you going to mope around here!?" The angry words roared into Banagher's ears as the sand fell from his limp swaying body. His feet would not listen as his body was supported by hand grabbing him by the chest. However, Zinnerman's hand that was holding this weight showed no signs of shaking at all.

“We’ll leave after sunset. Get into the ship immediately. We need to prepare a lot of things if we want to pass through the desert.”

Banagher was suddenly pushed down as he landed on his backside. The feeling of the unexpectedly hard sand rocked his mind, *why?* and he wanted to say this, but the voice was stuck in his throat as he was unable to speak up. “Ah?” he avoided Zinnerman’s intimidating stare as he squeezed out a hoarse voice, “Why look for me?”

“Because you look like you’re the most idle.”

“That’s too reckless. How are we to walk across the desert?”

“I once served in Africa during the wars, so I more or less know about the desert. It can work.”

“Hey, get up.” Zinnerman said that as he grabbed Banagher by the chest. Banagher felt the sharp pain from the cramped muscles and wanted to cry out as he only cared about looking back, saying, “Please stop…!”

“Let me alone. I had enough. I don’t want to be involved with anyone else. I don’t want to be made use of.”

“Fat hope. Fulfill your duty as a pilot.”

“Duty? I did my duty. I rode on the mobile suit and sank a Neo Zeon terrorist. Is that not enough? How many more must I kill?”

Only this time did Banagher look right at Zinnerman in the eyes and spoke directly to him. *What duty and responsibility? It ended up like this after I listened to those words.* As he thought about how he would not be fooled again and intended to stand on his feet, a blunt sound rang in his mind as his world exploded.

The body that was punched aside landed hard onto the floor, and the burning hot taste of sand spread in his mouth. The face that was buried in the sand started to ache, and Banagher’s body was trembling as he heard Zinnerman say, “You can deny us all you want.”

“But don’t you dare think of yourself as a victim and throw a tantrum at me. I can still recognize it if the one that shot down Gilboa is a pilot, but not a brat who doesn’t have any resolve.”

The words became a needle that was thrown, and the hands that were resting on the sand were trembling, but it was unable to remove the feeling of being punched. The lead in Banagher’s stomach was burning, and he forcefully spat the sand that became dirt in his mind “I didn’t do this on my own will…” he muttered as he wiped away the

blood on the corner of his mouth.

“Someone else forced me to ride on a mobile suit, and things ended up like this before I even knew what happened. If you’re not going to forgive me, just kill me. Don’t beat around the bush and talk about something like duty; can’t you just harden your heart and kill me…!?”

Zinnerman’s hard fist was still clenched as he answered with his trembling eyelids. *See, this man talks big, but he’s no different from those guys who want the “Box”.* Banagher said, “You don’t dare to do so anyway.” Banagher said with his busted lips that were curled up.

“If I die, the “Unicorn” won’t move. If you can’t extract the data of the “Box”, you’ll just let this treasure rot. No matter how you hate me, it’s impossible for you to kill—”

The second impact struck his face, and his body that was sent flying away hit the dune behind. He felt a numbing feeling in his skullcap, “those big shots may think that way, but we’re different”, Zinnerman growled, and Banagher stared at his bearded face.

“It doesn’t matter what happens to the “Box”. My ship doesn’t have the room to feed someone like you who has no will to live.”

The burly figure became a shadow as it moved towards Banagher, blocking his sights. The eyes of a killer were glittering somehow deep within, just like the first time, and Banagher clenched his hands together with the sand.

Banagher stared at the two black eyeballs that were not showing any light, and exerted strength to stiffen his trembling knees. He tried his best to let his trembling body stand up, and glared at Zinnerman with all his strength. *Do it if you can. I’ll spit my blood on you once I’m beaten down.* As he was driven by this unknown temper, his swaying body was about to straighten, and Zinnerman showed some teeth on his ominous looking face.

Before he could understand that it was a smile, he was gently nudged back and landed on his backside. “What kind of expression is that?” Zinnerman gave a wry look, and this was an unexpected response to Banagher as he looked back.

“Someone who can give that kind of expression will not collapse that easily. Hurry up and get ready. The desert won’t listen to any excuses humans make.”

Zinnerman finished and walked away. *Are you serious?* Banagher wanted to open his mouth and ask, but was unable to let out a sound

as his wildly pounding heart spread the feeling of this fear that came a moment later. His body that was unneeded by anyone and self-neglected continued to give the sound of life stubbornly— “Damn it!” Banagher groaned as he kicked the sand at his feet. The blood that rushed up his body caused him to recall the heat, and the large amount of sweat that suddenly started to flow out evaporated before they dripped.

Part 7[edit]

The sun that was radiating the bright white light was dyed red, half-hidden behind the dunes, and the surrounding temperature stared to feel. This was the so-called radiation cooling effect at work. As there was almost no moisture in the air, the temperature could not remain certain, and there were temperature differences of around 30 degrees Celsius between both day and night. It was hard to imagine from the scorching heat in the day, but it was not uncommon to freeze to death in the desert.

The scorching heat and harsh coldness repeated itself through day and night, and this climate reminded Banagher of the moon. It would be more appropriate to assume this as a barometric pressure suited for survival, a place without the blessing of the atmosphere. Banagher zipped up his jumper and put the cloth acting as a hood around his neck, and looked around at the endless number of sand dunes that appeared around him. He heard the sound of wind and sand blowing by, and there was nothing moving. As he waited for the stars to blink, the surroundings would probably be so silent that one would believe that this was the moon.

Is he really going to cross such a place? Banagher knelt down at where he was, and checked whether the gaiters were secured at the bottom of his jeans as he observed the group of people gathered at the airlock. The area was surrounded by dusk, and light shone from the airlock showing the backs of Flaste and the other crew members. He could see their anxious expressions, and Zinnerman was right in the middle of that group, still intending to wear the old leather jacket and the captain hat. “This map is made by the guerillas, and we can rely on them.” His voice sounded extremely loud in the wind.

“We’ll try to move quickly at night only. As long as there’s moonlight, we’ll be able to see 5, 600m around us. It’s bad that we don’t have a GPS for desert use, but we’ll be able to see the stars clearly, and if we use a compass as well, we’ll find a way.”

The Captain pretended to sound relaxed as he laid out the map, while Flaste and the rest gave obviously suspicious looks. *He’s not kidding*

now, is he? Banagher too gave a suspicious look as he managed to prevent himself from talking. He obeyed Zinnerman's words and started to check on the luggage in his backpack. It included rations, sleeping bags, flashlights, warm clothing, anti UV lip cream, scarves, sunshade clothes, a first aid kit with pesticide, and most importantly, water—and this was heavy. There was four days worth of water, 5 liters a day, and the backpack weight almost 30kg. If they wanted to cross the desert, this weight itself would be an indicator of life…

"The distance to Atal is approximately 63km. if we move quickly by night, we'll reach there in the morning 4 days later as long as nothing goes wrong. Once we contact our allies there, I estimate that we'll be able to send a rescue squad here on the fifth morning. I suppose the guerilla forces of Adrar and Tirith Zemul will take action."

"I don't think this is really a good idea…"

Flaste spoke up in place of the anxious crew. Everyone present felt that it was better to let a mobile suit punch through the belly of the shape than to make such a risk, but Zinnerman superficially answered everyone's doubts as he put on his backpack. "Take command while I'm not around." He told Flaste and left the crew.

"If there's still no news after 5 days, blow up the ship however you want. Bring the mobile suits out to contact our allies…let's move out, brat."

Flaste and the rest of the crew were attracted by Zinnerman's stare as they looked over at Banagher. Without anyone saying anything, the biggest reason why they were against having Zinnerman cross the desert was because of the person accompanying him. Banagher endured the suspicious stars as he carried the backpack, thinking, *Who cares about you guys. If you have any objections, go talk to your Captain.* The weight that pressed down heavily on his back caused him to miss his footing, and he frantically regained his balance as he pretended to look calm while walking over to Zinnerman.

"I'm going then. Help us pray that there won't be any sandstorms."

Zinnerman waved goodbye at everyone as he started to trek off. Flaste watched his Captain leave with a reluctant look, and then shot a meaningful look at Banagher. *You better prepare yourself there—* Banagher felt a chill from this cold stare, but he immediately focused on looking to the front at this desert trip the two of them would embark on. He turned his back on the setting sun that was like a ripened fruit and climbed up the gradually sloping surface to the other dune. *Let's go then.* As he harbored this thought, his foot got stuck in the sand,

and he ended up falling forward so soon after he embarked on this trip.

Part 8[edit]

On the same day, April 21st, it was US Central Standard time, 1pm.

Augusta was raining, and the rain that was colder than rain in spring was scattering down from the dark clouds above, causing the idling walkway to be dyed a light grey color. Alberto Vist spent his time waiting as he leaned his back against the medium-sized airport control tower, looking up at the clouds that were hovering at a low place as he heard the sound of raindrops dropping on the umbrella. Soon after, a black spot appeared in the sky, and the roaring of a jet engine could be heard mixed amidst the rain. At that moment, the silhouette of a shuttle was gradually looming.

The belly of the shuttle, which was filled with anti-heat materials, lowered its undercarriage and landed on the runway lit with beacon lights. The friction on the wheels caused the rainwater to steam off, and the machine gradually slowed down as the thrust reverser boomed loudly. There were no signs of any other machines in this Augusta Research facility that also functioned as a mobile suit experimental place. Alberto waited for the taxiing shuttle to reach its apron as he got on the electric car his subordinate was driving on. The passenger step moved along at the same time as it started to move to the apron.

This shuttle that reached Augusta was a miniature one that moved to and fro from Earth, one belonging to Anaheim Electronics, and there was an “AE” logo printed on the side of the machine. It was a company shuttle used by those in the corporate-class in emergency situations, but not a lot of people would ride a private shuttle to Earth and to the Moon. The step car brought the ladder to the airlock of the shuttle, and Alberto got off the electric car, waiting patiently on this runway that was drenched in rainwater. After that, the airflow let out what sounded like a deep sigh as it opened, and a cabin crewman who got of the shuttle beforehand was holding the umbrella at the door.

A short woman dressed in a wine red suit walked down the steps. The 1G gravity caused her to tumble, but she did not grab onto the crewman’s hand as she corrected her posture. She looked down the wide runway from the top of the steps, and upon noticing Alberto’s stare immediately, narrowed her eyes.

The woman was already over the age of 50, but she showed no hesitation over how to live like a woman. This woman was the wife of Anaheim Electronics' chairman, and also, the stand-in leader of the Vist Foundation. Alberto succumbed under the usual stare of Martha Vist Carbine and gulped. Martha let her loose lips remain shut, looked up at the grey sky, received an umbrella from the crewman, and started to walk down the stairs.

"The rain's annoying."

Despite the fact that engines of the shuttle were still running, he could tell that she said that her lips said those words from their shape. Alberto bowed respectfully as he got ready to welcome the Empress of the Moon.

Part 9[edit]

They were in Augusta, located in Northern America, Georgia, near the Clarks Hill Lake on the border between South Carolina and Georgia. The local Newtype research facility called the Augusta Newtype

Research Institute was located beside the lake, a vast place that used to be a mobile suit experimental center.

However, the term Newtype Research Institute was taken down, and it had been a long time since the military facilities here were taken down. The land was registered under the Federation air force, but the airport in the facility was never used as an air base. On first glance, the similarly shaped empty buildings were all abandoned here. Alberto walked on his feet that ushered Martha beforehand towards the largest building called the A block. There were 6 levels in this building that was 50m in length all around, and it looked as gloomy as an abandoned hospital under the cloudy sky, awaiting Alberto and Martha who came out from the electric car.

“Just a few more amendments to the process before unit 2’s testing under gravity conditions is complete. We used the combat data from unit 1 as feedback, so there’s a mass improvement in space mobility as compared to the beginning.”

The lobby felt very cold without the air-conditioning. Alberto followed Martha, who did not look behind as she walked, and reported the situation during the past two days.

“Captain Macias of the Senate Council came to inspect yesterday. We merely let the test pilot carry out some demonstrations, but he seemed to be satisfied. He indicated that the UC plan must not be left out of this space forces realignment plan…”

At this point, Alberto suddenly went quiet as he stopped in his tracks, as he sensed someone moving at the corner leading to the elevator hall.

At a corner of the passage that was somewhat dim because of energy conservation, there was a black shadow popping out from a corner. That shadow moved lightly, forming the shape of a human, and became a shadow of a 4, 5 year old child as it stared right back from the corner. Those familiar eyes looked like they were about to be etched in Alberto’s eyes, and he could not help but look away. *Haven’t you had enough already?* Alberto thought as he widened his tense eyes with fear. The child who looked eerily similar to Banagher Links suddenly disappeared, and the shadow of the foliage plant placed at the corner was dragged along the floor.

He exhaled hard and moved his feet that stopped. Martha, who stopped as well, gave him a scrutinizing look. Alberto then coughed to try and hide things through and continued his report without looking at her,

“The Settlement Issues Council seemed to be on the move as well, but the High Staff Committee do support the Foundation. As the stand-in leader estimated, once we can complete the deal using unit 2—”

“You’re still concerned about that?”

Martha again stepped forward as she spoke up to interrupt Alberto. He did not understand what she meant as she looked at the figure in front that never looked back.

“You’re still concerned about that? Alberto?”

The sharp scrutinizing voice rang ago, and a stare that looked like it could see through everything shot over. Alberto felt a shudder on his shoulders as he took this cold stare that overlooked the shoulders “… No.” he answered as he lowered his head. “That’s good.” Martha said as she looked in front.

“It was unexpected of the “Sleeves” to come and take the “Unicorn” away, but it was a wise decision to abandon the machine. You were correct in choosing not to take it back, but to destroy it.”

The white machine fell into the scorching abyss as the traction wire was snapped—he recalled that scene and asked himself whether it was the correct decision. At that time, he merely had the impulse of wanted to get rid of the “Unicorn” from his eyes, and he did not remember making a sane decision. That was because he was scared, and he hated the eyes of the “Unicorn” pilot that were the same as Cardeas—Banagher Links, who was protected by the machine Cardeas put so much effort in making, and who appeared several times in front of him. Those eyes that could overlap his own when he looked into the mirror looked like they would reveal the sins he committed over and over again…

“Don’t think about that again. Biologically, both you and he are blood-related brothers, but we are all humans. We have more important priorities to protect than blood relations, and you, as the heir of the Vist family, completed the responsibility you’re tasked with.”

Martha continued to speak softly, and it was unclear if she actually understood his heart. *A responsibility to take down every single relative, including father and brother?* in fact, Alberto felt that he was cursed, and he softly answered, “Yes.”

“Besides, it is likely that he’s still alive, so you will probably face him again. You two may be blood relatives, but you must not let someone who’s not on your side to handle the key to the “Box”. You do understand, right?”

She looked back and gave a stare, indicating that he must not fail the next time around. Alberto did not have the confidence to answer her calmly as he hurried his steps to move past Martha. He turned around the corner, walked for another 20m, and arrived at the metal door at the end of the corridor. He then took out the ID card and swiped it at the card reader.

The light indicating that the door was unlocked lit up, and the thick and heavy metal doors opened aside. They stepped through the door, and there was a bright space with air-conditioning inside. There were several sealed windows on the walls of this passage, and several white-clothed workers could be seen standing there, working. The Augusta Research Institute was announced to be closed off, and this was the area that could not be exposed to the public. Martha showed no signs of fear on her face as she advanced forward, and stepped into this highly fortified area that had much of the facility's security.

It was unknown where the antiseptic smell came from. There were no energy-saving implements within the facility, yet it felt very dark inside, probably because there used to be experiments ignoring human ethics carried out here. It was said that the Newtype Research Institute acted under the name of a military research facility as they carried out surgical and medicinal procedures on war orphans that were helpless, creating a large number of vegetables, and was ordered to be shut down as a result. The old facilities and researchers still remained here however, only because this was an official military institute. Of course, this being a facility for the air force would not be enough reason to give it budget to carry on operating. The difference between the budget the military gave and the expenses paid for operations was provided by Anaheim through multiple 3rd party sectors.

It had been two days since he reached this place, but he really could not bring himself to like this place. He even felt a false hallucination, that someone was watching him, and when looking back, he could hear the footsteps of several children running away. There were also rumors of many ghosts, like a boy wearing a blood-stained surgical gown or the brain juices of a girl spilling out from the skullcap that had its scalp removed. There were some amongst his accompanying subordinates who would even state openly that they heard the laughter of children as well. *Those useless hallucinations I saw are definitely due to the messages left inside my mind.* Alberto saw the ominous shadows stuck on the wall, and started to feel a chill. He then recognized the white-clothed man in front of him and stopped in his tracks.

"I'm the facility chairman Bentner. Excuse me for being unable to

welcome you directly."

Bentner said this as he reached his hand forward, and he sure did fit the image of a head of a human laboratory. His arched back, bald head and frail body that was covered with a white coat could be said to be the incarnate of a mad scientist, and as ominous as a prison warden in the Middle Ages. "Hello." Martha answered coldly without changing her expression, and used her hand to raise her hair. Bentner's outstretched hand had nowhere to go as it returned back, and his face that looked to be around 60 showed the smile of a slave bowing humbly.

"You must be tired after such a long trip. How about—"

"It's rare for me to come by here, but I do treasure my important time. Can you please tell me the current progress?"

Martha's style was to look down on those servile to her and tell them to do whatever they could do as they could. Alberto nodded silently at Bentner who gave a doubtful glance. In the past, the Federation army intended to cover everything up in and eliminate all the researchers, thinking that they could shake themselves off their misfortune. However, Bentner, who was somehow able to fight against it and protect his own position, was definitely not just a bookworm. "Excuse me, please come here." He quickly understood that the chairwoman did not come here for leisure, kept his smile, and walked first, showing his own adaptability.

"I should say that this is really to be expected of a Cyber-Newtype. Her recovery ability is really shocking, and she is basically no different from a healthy person. It is possible for her to pilot a mobile suit in another 3 days."

Bentner pressed on the nearest elevator button as he explained. Martha merely looked at the level display as she did not bother to answer.

"She's the perfect pilot for the "Banshee", and to us, a very rare test subject, so every member here is motivated. But despite the backing from Anaheim, it is hard to acquire specimens after we lost the support of the military. But asking us to continue the research is a little too…"

"What problems does she have?"

Martha spoke up to interrupt and walked in first after the elevator reached. Bentner showed a shocked look as he was taken aback by the other party, and immediately followed her, saying, "The problem is that her she is the designed genetic plan-type." as he closed the

elevator doors.

“If it is a Cyber-Newtype that went through acquired adjustments, it won’t be difficult to adjust her again. With the help of the drugs, we can remove the memories in spurts without reducing their abilities. But someone with a designed genetic plan itself is different. She’s different from those with acquired adjustments, so she doesn’t use drugs that create rejection, and her reaction to psychotropic drugs will be no different from ordinary humans. To make it clearly, she’s not used to having her brain adjusted. If we force her to submit, we might break her sense of identity and make her worthless.”

The elevator reached the highest level, the 6th floor, and it seemed that the wind was blowing outside. Alberto heard the thunderclap from afar and arrived on the pathway where armed guards were on standby. There were metal gates on both sides of this passage, and this place felt more like an asylum for those severely mentally ill instead of a prison.

“So to simply put, it’s a problem with the heart. She has her own soul that’s unwilling to undergo readjustments again, right?”

Martha did not change her expression as she walked in front. *She,* Alberto was shocked inside by the term she used and stopped in front of the door with the number ‘12’ on it. “Well, stating it like that is…” Bentner spoke halfway through, but Martha looked inside the cell without hesitation, seemingly wanting him to back off.

A bed and a window framed with metal bars could be seen in this square room 5m wide. The silhouette sitting on the bed appeared for a moment as the lightning that struck from afar lit inside, and Alberto, who was looking inside this dark room from behind Martha’s head, gulped as he saw that face that looked much younger than he thought. *Did she look that frail before? She felt more muscular at that moment when she immediately used her body to protect me while the assassin attacked the “Nahel Argama”.* As Alberto experienced some sort of pain caused by conflicting emotions, “Interesting” he heard Martha state this in a nonchalantly cold manner, and looked at her with a terrified expression.

“I want to talk to her.”

Martha did not look away from the other side of the metal bars as her lips showed a smile. Alberto felt Bentner behind him gulp, and looked back at the “specimen” inside the room.

Marida Cruz did not mind the stares from outside the fence as her

puppet-like face did not move, looking outside the window. However, those eyes that were lit by the lightning flash seemed to show some vigor of life as she faced the outside world. On seeing this, Alberto experienced complicated emotions in his heart for a second time.

Part 10[edit]

The dunes that were blown by the winds would change their forms from time to time, revealing the beauty of a woman's body. The gradual ridges depicted the surface of a plump waist, and an observer would not help but think that it might feel as soft as a human body.

But in fact, these stretches of gradual sand dunes were the obstacles stumbling the feet of travelers. For every step they took, the sand pile would collapse, and the little amount of physical strength would dissipate bit by it. They had not completed even one-third of the journey on the second night of the trip. Banagher gritted his teeth, trying his best to follow Zinnerman who was walking 10m in front of him. The dry air of the night blew aside his sweat, causing his skin to tense up due to the cold. The temperature was around 10 degrees Celsius, and if there were wind, the temperature the body would feel should be blown this.

He had already drank one day's worth of water, and logically, the bag should have become lighter, but he found it heavier than yesterday because he did not sleep well in the day. Whenever his consciousness was about to fade, a large number of flies would fly from out of nowhere, and the fluttering of the wings would prevent him from sleeping. The sunlight would shine in through his eyelids, unwilling to fade. The rest time would then end just when he was about to enter dreamland, and he would begin his trek again when the sun sets. The fatigue accumulated on the previous day was still on him, and he could not muster his appetite as he continued to walk and drag his lethargic body.

What about Zinnerman? Banagher pursued the figure that disappeared behind the ridge and finally stepped on the top. After seeing the scenery laid out in front of him, he was speechless.

After walking down the slope, he would have to go uphill again, and there was another dune on the other side of the dune. There was a ridge of dunes that littered the landscape, and the large ones could reach 100m tall, while the wide ones could reach several kilometers. The gradation presented by nature was so intricate it was shocking. There did not seem to be any room for humans senses to be involved with, and the overly intricate scene caused him to feel like vomiting. Zinnerman left behind footprints as he walked down the slope, looking

like a speck of dust destroying these layers.

Is this nature? Was humanity born from this merciless beauty? Did they carve out thousands of years of history like this? Banagher's mind and soul that grew up in the large cylinders called colonies were shocked, and he remained rooted to the ground.

The dunes lit under the moonlight did not have any color, and the white gradients of the ridge drew a clear divide with the pitch darkness of night as the single toned world of desolation stretched down the endless horizon. *This is impossible. Anyone who wants to cross this place must be out of their mind.* Banagher yelled in his heart as his unwittingly retreated, and as he stepped backwards, the sand at his feet immediately collapsed, and his body was dragged down by the sand dune below. He landed on his backside, and tumbled back due to the weight of the haversack on his back, and rolled down the dune without being able to adjust himself.

His sights started to spin wildly, and the powder-shaped sand entered his nose and eyes. He let his shoulders and stomach hit the sand as he rolled down the slope like a broken puppet, before his body finally managed to stop rolling. He wanted to spit out the sand in his mouth, but he could not secrete any saliva, and he had no strength to sprout his body that was filled with sand as he could only hear the sound of footsteps approaching as they stepped on the sand. Banagher moved his fingers that laid feebly on the sand and tried to open his eyes, seeing the tip of Zinnerman's boots in his blurry sights.

He felt his arm being pulled by the other man, and his upper body that was sprawled on the floor was dragged up completely. His legs moved on their own, trying to stand up straight, but was unable to do so even with this momentum. He bent his knees that could not exert strength, and collapsed under the weight of the haversack again before sprawling on the floor. Zinnerman too tumbled on the sandy ground and gave an exasperated look as he stared at this ridiculous scene, muttering, "You idiot, you didn't drink, did you?"

"Didn't I tell you to drink regularly even if you're not thirsty?"

Banagher's face was dragged up, and the opening of the bottle was brought right to his lips. The water that was taken in instinctively entered his windpipe, causing him to choke hard. He bent down, used his remaining strength to cough, and his face hit the sandy ground that was thoroughly cold. "Oi, pull yourself through." Zinnerman said, but Banagher pushed aside his arm, curled up his body that was having difficulty in breathing, *Leave me alone.* and his dry lips mouthed out the words,

“Just leave me alone…please let me stay here.”

Banagher let out a hoarse voice from his throat that felt like it was stuck. After a short moment of silence, “Don’t say such sorry things.” Zinnerman answered, but his voice felt so distant.

“Even if I walk along with you, I’ll just drag you down. Please move first, I’ll try to find a way…”

“What nonsense are you spouting? What can you do alone when you can’t even read the constellations? You’ll just move around in the same direction and get dried up to death in the wild.”

“That’s fine too…you pulled me out here for this aim, right?”

“Huh?”

“You want to let me dry out to death in the desert…so just kill me…”

Banagher sensed that the bearded face was raising his eyelids, taking a deep sigh through his nose. “Really, I didn’t expect you to have such thoughts when you came along with me.” Zinnerman said this with a wry look as he dusted off the sand on his buttocks and stood up.

“Just like I said, this stretch is the toughest area. It’ll take a week for us to make a detour, so that means we can only move through this stretch. Once we can do so, it’s all flatland there on. It’s just a little longer, hang in there.”

Hang in there. These words entered Banagher’s heart, causing him to feel a burning sense of negativity. *Why must I be the one hanging in here? What right do I have?* He grabbed the sand and looked back at Zinnerman’s eyes that were looking down at him and moved his throat, “I am…!” that was about to be blocked.

“I rode on a mobile suit, killed people, and now I’m desperately trying to walk in this desert. How much more do you want me to work hard? What exactly do you hope that I do…!? Everyone’s just caring about themselves, forcing others into despair…that’s too irresponsible…”

Do what you feel you have to do, fulfill your responsibility. The words Cardeas and Daguza said echoed in his empty body dampening his sights. *Even if I worked hard here, I can’t save anyone. No one will end up being saved, and nobody will save me. I don’t want to do anything, and I know that no matter what I do, everything will all be wasted. It’s just like what my ‘older brother’ said, I’m a seed of disaster bringing misfortune to others.*

I'm bothered even when people placed their expectations on me. I have nothing to repay you. I just feel "disjointed" from the world as I lived in a corner of an artificial colony. If there's a chance to return to such a lifestyle, I really want to return. I want to return to the moments where I didn't have to kill anyone, not get cursed by my own bloodline, and live my life with the vague gentleness. If only I never rode on the "Unicorn". If only I never met Audrey— the water droplets that flowed down his face landed on the floor, and he grabbed the sand in his hands tightly as he heard the sound of these water droplets dripping into the dry ground. Zinnerman snorted out air as he patted the captain's hat that was covered in sand, saying with a spurning tone, "What are you hoping from an outsider unrelated to you?"

"It's already tough for those who want to live normal lives to take care of you, let alone at this moment of life and death. Even if they're just saying that they care, you should be grateful that someone's willing to talk to you."

To Banagher, these words were unexpected. He felt the lead in his stomach twirling and saw Zinnerman's face in his sights. At this point, he saw that the two eyes looking down at him were giving off a glint of light that was stronger than the night sky.

"Even if you complain to me like that, your expression isn't showing any signs of dying off. You still have the strength to fight. It's because I felt that you can stand on your own that I brought you along. No matter how painful it is, if you're a man, you should answer back to other people's expectations, raise your chest and endure until the moment you die."

Zinnerman carried his haversack again and stepped forward without waiting for a reply. Banagher supported his upper body almost instinctively, "Fight…what do you want me to fight with?" and asked. "Think about it." the back profile that answered this had already left Banagher halfway out of its mind.

"A man's life is a battle until death."

He added these words that came flowing over with the wind hit the ears and went off. Banagher raised his knees forward and brought his upper body forward as he stood on the sandy ground shakily. He stepped forward to the back profile that was leaving him, not know exactly why he had to do this. *I'm an idiot.* His body that realized this sufficiently stepped on the endless stretch of gradients.

He walked on the ground that would collapse whenever he stepped, climbed uphill step by step, went down again, and would then move

along a towering ridge to the next dune. He did not want to lose to that back profile, and he wanted to catch up to the man; Banagher's thoughts became his pillar of support as he continued to chase silently. The moonlight was covered by the dune behind him, and the starry light caused the dunes hidden in the darkness to appear. Nothing was moving except for the two shadows that were some distance away from each other, moving forward as they left small trails on the sand dunes. This was a world where nothing could be heard other than the sound of wind and their own breathing. It seemed that all of humanity had died off as both of them were the only ones left in the world, absolute silence surrounding them…

Zinnerman did not look back as he continued on in regular steps. Banagher let his body that was carrying the bag lean forward as he moved his own feet silently. *What's with that guy?* He could not see any clear goal from him like Cardeas, and he was not a by-the-book soldier like Daguza. Zinnerman was different from Frontal in that he did give off a human-like vibe, but there was some attraction from his back that caused Banagher to be dragged along for some reason. Even without looking back, he could grasp Banagher's current situation. If Banagher fell, he would return to pick him up. While he gave a mysterious sense of relief, there was some obstinate feeling from him, and he did not allow others to enter his own heart. in the end, that figure that he could not get close to remained right in front of him, even though he would not leave—

"I met the Captain at the Federation's detention barrack. At that time, I was part of the Youth Service Squad, a group of brats that would listen to the orders from anyone else in the base. Same goes for Gilboa. We're all stripped naked and had our butts inspected, and we can be said to be a band of brothers on the same boat of disaster."

The words Banagher heard from Flaste before he left echoed in his mind, and he looked at the sand that landed at his feet. During the One Year War, Zinnerman and company took part in an attack on Earth, and fought until the bitter end in Africa before being captured by the Federation. They then awaited the end of the war in the detention cells, not knowing how the war in space ended, and nobody told them what happened to their hometown.

"To the Federation, we're just demons who sent a colony crashing to Earth. The treatment we had at the detention barracks was way different from what was in the agreement, but it didn't matter. Even if we were brats back then, we're all soldiers. As long as we ate the food the army gave us, we had to bear the name of the country no matter where we went. What I could not forgive was that the Federation

pointed their guns at our relatives left in our hometown."

"After the war ended, the Principality of Zeon was forced to disband and restart as a republic. However, a change in name alone can't possibly erase all hatred that was culminated since the past. To the occupying army on the republic, Zeon was Zeon. They could not end all grudges just because the war ended, because too many people died in it. While the big-shots were negotiating for peace, the occupying forces had been building up their unhappiness. And there was an increase in voices by the day, like whether they could forgive the Zeon monsters, like whether they should raze the Zeon colonies to the ground like how we suffered, until it reached a point where it was not surprising to have any riots. Kill off all these inhumane Zeons, go to Zeon if you want to snatch women. Those people grew up hearing these words during the war, and some of their brothers died in Zeon's hands. Sacrifices were needed to vent their frustrations. They needed something to vent their anger and hatred and slice it up for the public to see…the place they chose was the town the Captain's home was."

The name of the town that was chosen was called Globe. That night, there was a curfew enforced on it, and all the residents were forbidden from moving out. As everyone held their breaths and hid inside, the occupying force encircled the place and charged into the town under the preface of suppressing riots. The soldiers who went out were about to return back, so there were old people, women and children left inside the town.

The soldiers that were manipulated by the higher-ups in a subtle manner were beasts hungry for blood. During the night, they opened every single household door and did whatever they wanted. To them, it did not matter whether it was an adult or a child. The men were tortured to death, the private parts of the women were violated, and the children that were shrieking and crying were shot down, unable to cry. Armed soldiers surrounded the town, and nobody could reach their hand for support. The police and the media could only remain silent at this 'venting of frustration' both the occupying army and the Republic's government allowed.

There was no consensus on Globe being the sacrifice in the first place, but the fact remained that when the colony was thrown down to Earth, the footage of when Zeon celebrating and applauding their victory was spread throughout the world, and the residents of Globe were caught on television. The sight of the residents of Zeon smiling as they trampled on billions of corpses, immersed in a celebratory atmosphere —probably caused the Federation people watching this live telecast to gather their hatred and anger on the town of Globe that just happened

to be on television. Either way, there was none of the terms ‘logic’ and ‘rationality’ in the soldiers’ minds when they ravaged the entire town, and their savage behavior after this violence easily broke down the lives of the people that built this town. They were mocked, trampled, and robbed of all their pride. More than thousands of people suffered the most cruel deaths in the world.

Those who died early were fortunate. If there were children watching their mothers being raped, the reverse could have happened in the future. No one could remain sane after such a cruel night. The festival of madness lasted until morning, leaving only counting corpses. Burnt scenes floated out from the houses that caught fire, and the stench of corpses and pee were mixed inside, remaining inside the colony for countless days. Just like how the Zeon army introduced poison gas into a colony, the town became a complete wasteland. No, it was not even a wasteland, but a used ‘public toilet’ for the Federation army to vent their frustrations, an exhibition of the cruelty humanity could show.

The Federation explained to the public that the tragedy of Globe happened because the residents rioted as the military was oppressing the resistance, and they had to suppress them with military force. The Republic government and the media accepted this saying and both the occupying army and the republic government had a common understanding as they accepted this, that they should permit such behavior if that kind of sacrifice could allow them to calm down. Either way, the truth was as clear as daylight even without explaining. Zinnerman and company returned back to Zeon after an exchange of prisoners, and immediately understood what happened after seeing his own hometown ravaged to the ground. They hated the Federation, hated the Republic government that became a mere puppet, and more than anything, hated themselves for being unable to protect their families.

They cursed themselves for being weak, and whenever they thought about the suffering they suffered before their deaths, their frustrations would cause them to blame themselves, until they went mad for days. To these people who lost their hometown in all sorts of ways, the only choice left for them was to fight on. “Axis”, in the distant asteroid belt, took in the recently born Mineva Zabi, and this place became the hiding place for Zinnerman and company for years. After “Axis” returned to the Earth celestial sphere, they called themselves Neo Zeon and started from there, investing themselves in the two Neo Zeon Wars. There was no such thing as ceasefire, and they continued to start wars all to accept that they were still alive.

“Even till now, I wonder what will happen to me if the opposite was

true. In a war, anyone will go insane. It's not rare to see photos of people smiling and showing V-handsigns even after seeing the corpses of enemy soldiers piled up one after another…but the people from the Federation are humans, and we're humans. Some things can't be forgiven no matter what people say. If anyone heard that the tragedy of Globe was filmed and still circulated in the black market, I'll want to send another colony down."

"Do you understand? Our wives and kids became toys covered with blood, and that image is filmed up and still circulated around somewhere in the world. Some sickos even feel excited by seeing that. We couldn't save them even if we heard the screams from that time. It's impossible for time to be reversed. Can you imagine that kind of regret, that bitterness that's much worse than us being chopped up to pieces?"

This was not a question that could be answered immediately. Banagher merely lowered his head and avoided Flaste's bloodshot eyes.

"We, who were given a new lease of life to act as bodyguards for the princess, spent our efforts finding the scumbag dealer who circulated the video. We discovered Marida when we were checking on the routes those bloody perverts used. As for Marida…well, I suppose I shouldn't mention. Anyway, we didn't do this out of fun."

"Zeon did launch a colony down to Earth, and it is understandable that there is ample reasons for us to die. But the hatred we put on ourselves is different from a conflict between countries. It's not about reviving Zeon and redeeming ourselves. We don't care about what happens to the "Box"; we only have two options, whether to curse the world or to keep fighting."

Therefore, don't think that you definitely won't be killed off. Flaste ended off, grabbed Banagher by the chest, and chided him sternly,

"I don't know your background, but I do know that you're the enemy pilot who killed Gilboa. Listen, I'll make you pay if you dare pull the Captain down. if you're a pilot, build your own way to live like a pilot."

A pilot is a fighting unit that has no grudges whether it is killed or killed others. Banagher compared these words to what Marida said before as he started to think. He was viewed as a pilot, and even if it was an outcome prompted out of coincidence, he had fulfilled the purpose of a pilot. Even if he was called a brat, no one was willing to play around with him. He thought, *I'm seen as being part of the situation, and I'm actually affecting the situation.*

It did not happen like this because he hoped for it. It was the same for Zinnerman or Flaste or the rest. Everyone was caught in an unreasonable situation. Even if they wanted to live in any way they wanted, this world was too cruel, and humans were too helpless. Currently, he was on the border of life and death. He did not know how much he could continue walking. The body of flesh that was removed from its civilized looking skin was so fragile. Perhaps it was a mistake to think that humans were born with such a cruel nature, and an absolutely unreasonable possibility.

Even so, humans continued to live on, fought against this harsh nature, drank water, and devoured other forms of life. Zinnerman harbored such pain that could not be compensated even in death, but he still lived on. Banagher kept saying that he did not want to do anything, but he was still walking. He could stop in his tracks, but an unknown impulse he had no idea of was pushing him as he continued to walk forward without caring.

That was because Banagher instinctively knew that if he stopped in his tracks, he would be losing to this unreasonable situation. The moment he stopped and started cursing the world, his world would be shut off. Humanity used their fragile bodies to explore nature, survive and finally fly into space. This impulse that ignores everything pushes all unreasonable parts of the world, whether they were diseases, famines, discriminations', war…all the lives living on this world would have to fight against such unreasonable things, and the history of wars were past of humanity's history.

That was why they had to progress, to move forward, to keep walking straight until they could accept this, to this world that would liberate them from all unreasonable things. Even if they know that such a world did not exist, they had to continue on mindlessly, even if they had to destroy this nature around them. They had to keep shouting as part of their instincts, that they would not lose as long as they were walking forward.

And then, they had to make an endless dream. They could not allow themselves to stop, they had to desire, rush to the target they wished to destroy and find the hope that had never wilting. They had to harness the power of possibilities residing inside their bodies and believe that tomorrow would be better. *A glass of water, a little compassion from everyone else, I feel like I can continue on a little longer just by knowing the suffering everyone had.* As he harbored such simple and gentle thoughts…

However, living bodies were still bodies of flesh. Even if he was

unwilling, the flesh had its own limits. A strong sleepy feeling suddenly surged up in Banagher, and his feet were starting to feel heavy. The shadows of night gathered from around, and his visibility quickly darkened. *No, don't sleep, keep going.* Even as he said these words in his heart, it was useless as the ground at his feet rose up vertically, and his hands that wanted to support his body slid along the sand. The impact that crashed into the ground became a distant echo, and Banagher could not even feel the impact of the fall as his face was buried in the sand, his consciousness drifting away.

Part 11[edit]

The cracking sounds of flames could be heard, and Banagher felt the heat touching his face as he opened his eyes.

A column of smoke could be seen rising up, seemingly mixing into the faint ink-like starry night. Zinnerman was beside him, sitting on the ground and setting a fire, and the shadows that were casted upon the rock behind them were swaying. Banagher's eyes caught sight of the marks around the shadows. These pictures looked like cow herds and people holding bows and arrows, and on a closer look, there were countless marks like this craved all over the rock wall. Perhaps these marks were left behind since a long time ago by the people living here when humanity first started to move.

The wall showed people tending to their livestock, men heading to war and women facing each other while sitting on chariots. *Does this mean that this place had greenery for people to live, that there were work, wars, families and all sorts of human activities?* As he laid down, Banagher looked up at the wall as he lingered in a half-dazed manner, only to suddenly see Zinnerman, who had been looking at him, right in the eyes.

He wanted to get up immediately, only to notice a blanket covering him. His body that was lying on the hard floor was completely stiff, and whenever he moved, he would feel intolerably sore. Zinnerman took up the small pot heated over the fire and poured the fluid in it over to an empty can. *Here*, he then handed the can over while seemingly saying this. The fragrance of the hot soup flowed out from within, and Banagher received the soup can without thinking.

He hurriedly poured the hot soup into his thoroughly cold and dry body, finding it a waste of time to wait for it to turn cold. The soup that was heated by a real fire was different from a vessel that had a heating function, as it could warm even a person's heart. His invigorated nerves were starting to move, and there was a sense of warmth inside his body. He could feel that his body that should have used all energy

and strength was trembling due to delight, pulsating. *I'm not dead yet, I'm still alive.* The moment he understood this, he gathered all the warmth to his nose and looked up at the sky.

The tears that remained in his eyes flowed out, and he stared at the stars that flickered in his blurry sights. This night sky that was powered by something unknown was brighter than he thought. The galaxy's arm flashed by as a river of light, causing the night sky to give a deep blue color.

"Why are you crying?"

Zinnerman threw a dried twig into the fire as he mumbled these words. Banagher continued to look up at the sky as he answered, "The stars are really so pretty…" *My excuse here is really stupid, but it's not a lie.* Zinnerman then snorted and looked up above his head.

The sounds of the maggots resting in the ground were quietly welling the breath of night as they were gradually sucked in by the darkness. Banagher remembered that scorpions and snakes would be attracted by heat, and rubbed his teary eyes before looking around. He saw that there was a pesticide sensor around them, and heaved a sigh of relief. It seemed that they had already climbed over the sand dunes. The surroundings were an uneven rugged rocky stretch, and he could see rocks that were in weird shapes due to many years of constant erosion. The hard and dry ground had lithic scattered all over the place, and the shrubs could be seen growing from the ground. A small figure suddenly lit its eyes and quickly disappeared into the darkness, probably a mouse living in the desert or some other organism.

There were organisms living in this place that even humans had already abandoned a long time ago. They continued to endure the harsh conditions, followed their impulsive will to live blindly, and continued to look for prey all just to continue their daily life. *Don't they find this world unreasonable?* Banagher looked up at this rocky wall that was most probably left behind by people of the past, and tried to pull through his thoughts that were not exactly thinking. Only humans were granted the ability to draw and to think. If this intelligence was the reason why humans felt that things were unreasonable, perhaps there was no other organisms who were caught in the cycle of cause and effect more than humans. If modern people could live with nature like those people who drew the wall painting—

"I feel like the saying that the Earth will be polluted is a hoax when I stay here."

Zinnerman looked up at the clear starry sky as he suddenly spoke up.

Feeling unexpected, Banagher stared the side of his face.

“But in fact, the sky here was a lot dirtier than before. It’s said that deserts would expand every year right until where Dakar is. This is a negative consequence of developing Earth again, and also a result of the abnormal weather caused by throwing down colonies and meteors…but these things probably didn’t matter to Earth.”

The wind blew through the cracks between the rocks, releasing the sound that resembled a human voice. Zinnerman did not look at Banagher’s face as he naturally continued,

“The meaning of protecting Earth is just about protecting the ecosystem humans relied on. This sentence can be established as the price of global warming, desertification, and Earth being polluted by chemicals. If humans can be considered to be the ones creating everything, the trash and toxins produced by humans can naturally be seen as part of nature. If humans are the only ones who can’t live, the likelihood is that nature is trying to achieve a balance. To Earth, it probably doesn’t matter whether there are any organisms living on Earth or not.”

Banagher, who nearly died at the hands of the desert, could empathize with this statement. Living together with nature—this kind of nature was probably a fantasy humans had after being pampered by civilization. He could only lower his head as he felt amazed by how shallow his thoughts were.

The older generations of humans who struggled against the harsh conditions instinctively knew about this. Nature will never show any mercy to humanity, so humanity created civilization to live on, and used the system called society to protect themselves. But as time went by, this system got overly complicated, and humans ended up having to live for the sake of maintaining the system. Humanity then launched wars and continued to develop, let the economy grow…until they ended up making it hard for them to live, reversing their priorities.

Once a fetter is set up, the task of protecting the fetter itself would become something the adults had to deal with, and this would cause them to lose their ability to view things from an objective standpoint — Banagher heard the words Daguza said before amidst the wind as they entered deep into his ears.

“That’s why humans tried to look for this new world in space, but the system still remained on Earth. What the system demanded was that the exceeding population was to be removed from the ground. In the end, a group of people were dumped into space and created a

different system there."

"It was Zeon. They brought hope to the Spacenoids who were basically abandoned and gave them a new system, indicating a new direction to live…naturally, the system on Earth was rejected. Two systems that originated from different sources couldn't coexist. One side had to succumb. This was established and proven by history by people of the olden times, before the Federation's system was set up."

Zinnerman looked far away between the stars where his hometown was and kept quiet. Banagher felt that the vague parts in his mind were becoming words, seeping deep into his mind, and stared at the man making the fire brighter. Zinnerman then glanced over "What? I'm not suitable for such things?" and asked, hiding his embarrassed expression as he pouted. "No." Banagher answered as he looked away from that unexpectedly amicable bearded face.

"I feel so amazed that you can arrange your thoughts so clearly, it's amazing…my history studies will be more decent if I was taught this way."

"That's because nature turns everyone into philosophers."

Zinnerman said with a comfortable voice and laid down on the ground. Banagher gave a wry look and stared at the empty can he drank from. "But…" he tried to turn the words in his heart into a voice.

"But, looking at history, humanity managed to create a united government in the Federation and created a world where billions of people could stay in space. I guess that's just a fantasy to those in the old ages, isn't it? Doesn't humanity also have this kind of possibility? It should be possible for humanity to unify these two thoughts and create a new system…"

Someone believed this before. Banagher did not hope that the speech the First Prime Minister of the Federation made as he was crushed together with "Laplace" in space was just a speech. Zinnerman did not move his body that was using its arm as a pillow, "That was established with many sacrifices." and said with a sigh.

"The Federation didn't view everyone as equal. There're many oppositions they shot down and fought. That grudge still exists on Earth. It's not going to be easily removed just like that."

Zinnerman showed his hatred of losing his wife and child because of the unjustness of history, and his face looked like a demon for a moment. Banagher was not willing to continue looking at him as he immediately lowered his head and said with a very inaudible voice,

“That was really too sad…”

“Yeah, it’s sad. We lived on to abandon our sadness…so why did it end up like this…”

Zinnerman’s muttering face was no longer like a demon, but the face of someone who was tortured unreasonably by sadness as large as a mountain, but still wanted to live on as a human. It was also the face of a human who experienced pain because of knowledge and blood, and yet could show gentleness. *This man is probably someone gentle. He doesn’t know how to deal with the cruel reality and can only let the devil reside in him—that’s really sad.* Banagher’s chest that was telling him this was shuddering, and tears of various sizes welled up in his eyes, silencing him. He laid down on the ground, his back facing Zinnerman, and he used the blanket to cover his sniffling sound.

Zinnerman gave a sharp stare right at Banagher’s back. “I know!” Banagher said without looking at the other man.

“You want to say that a man can’t cry in front of others, right?”

He rubbed his eyes, “it depends on the time and occasion” only to hear a quiet voice, and turned to look at Zinnerman.

“It’s ugly when someone cries out of self-pity, but it’s different if tears are shed for others. I won’t trust a man who won’t cry no matter what happens.”

After saying that, Zinnerman snuggled his body into the sleeping bag and did not move. “We’ll leave before dawn.” This voice rang beside in Banagher’s ears before he was about to enter that were about to enter the silence.

“We have to at least make up time for lagging behind. Rest well. Many illnesses are caused by a lack of sleep.”

The back profile that looked like a bear swayed on the other side with the fire. Banagher had an exceptional impression on that back as he closed his eyes.

I can understand many things by thinking about it. This thought caused Banagher to immediately forget about the lethargic self he showed for the past few days, and he muttered to himself that he should first cross this desert. However, the astonishingly powerful sleep monster leapt at Banagher, and in a moment, he fell into a deep slumber.

Part 12[edit]

However, it was not easy to make up time after lagging behind on a

journey in the desert.

The result of spending twice the amount of time expected to cross the sand dunes was that the relatively easy schedule they originally estimated was debunked. By the time the 3rd day ended, they cleared more than 30km. After using up 3 quarters of the estimated time, the fact that they only covered half the distance was right in front of them.

In the desert, delaying their journey would cause dehydration, the most severe situation. It was said that the limit of moving in a desert without drinking was 4 hours. Once the limit was exceeded, humans would be unable to move, and they could only wait as the fluids in their bodies get evaporated.

There was no water source in the middle of this journey, and of course, they could not hope for rain. Even though they saw several dark clouds on the horizon, the water would evaporate before they landed. On the 5th day, the water they rationed to the maximum was left at less than 500ml, and the bag that was originally heavy became exceptionally light. This light weight was basically equivalent to the amount of life they had left—the sunshade that was draped down from their shoulders covered them, and Banagher saw the faded looking sky as he touched his forehead that became rough due to his skin peeling. The skin felt completely different from the border of cloth. There was still some form of original skin color and feeling within 1cm from the line, and it felt like he was in a form of happiness called oblivion. To a bystander, the color on his forehead was definitely divided in half, and the skin under the cloth was like a baby, not knowing the fatigue of someone at his limits, and not knowing thirst.

The sunset that had already left the horizon for a long time was scattering its evil heat rays diagonally. Banagher's body required rest soon, but the back profile of Zinnerman that was walking in front showed no signs of stopping. He would look around from time to time, check the compass and the map, and continued to move beyond several rocky areas suitable for resting. If they stopped here, they would never move again—and Banagher had this sense of danger as well, but he did not feel that this was the only reason why Zinnerman would care about moving forward. During this time, he never saw Zinnerman check the GPS coordinates. Zinnerman did not say anything, and Banagher did not have the courage to ask him, but it was very likely that the GPS malfunctioned due to the heat.

No matter how long they walked, the similarly shaped rocky hills at the horizon were the only things that could be seen, and surrounding them were the wide and flat dry ground that was like the bottom of a pot.

Without a landmark, they might not be able to walk straight even with the help of a compass. People would exert more strength in the leg they were more comfortable with, and it was very likely that they would end up leaving a long arc on the sand without knowing. Looking at the map, they were probably not too far from Astal, but there were still no signs of any towns on the horizon, probably because they deviated from their course. Banagher stared at Zinnerman's back that was showing some anxiety as he merely felt a chill in an instant, and moved his legs with his blank mind. This was the only good thing about the desert. All doubts and anxiousness would be evaporated as sweat, and would not stay in the body. The hot wind that blew by would create some form of assistance, and everything that could be considered thoughts would flow out from the pores.

The wind that blew from the front was called Khamsin, a dry hot dusty wind. When the low pressure occurred in the Mediterranean or Europe, the hot air would flow in from the southwest into the Sahara. They would thirst to death if they did not hurry up, and if they hurried up, they would end up using up their water. Perhaps Zinnerman was in a state where he could not make decisions as well. The hot air blew onto his face like a hairdryer, and Banagher walked along this hot pot base, his body feeling completely hot. The completely parched tongue seemed like it became a sponge. *This wind is so hot!* The wind was constantly increasing in strength, blowing the heat that was enough to steam into the nostrils—

A black shadow appeared in the white vision, and Banagher lifted his head. Zinnerman, who stopped, let his body lie prone on the dry floor. He stared at the distant horizon of hills, not moving at all. The silhouettes of the rocky hills were shaking gradually, perhaps due to the effect of mirages, and it seemed to be rumbling like a tsunami.

No, that was not it. it was really rumbling. A reddish-brown block-shaped item was rising up from the horizon, gradually expanding as it became a vortex. That object could be seen gradually rising, slowly moving towards Banagher and Zinnerman. It was not the silhouette of the hills afar.

"A simoom…"

Zinnerman muttered. At this moment, the reddish brown vortex continued to increase in size as it spread towards the boundaries of the horizon they could see. The noise from the Simoom brewed across the land, whipping up a sand wall that was several hundred meters in height, sweeping the land like a flood ready to engulf the world. Zinnerman, who stood in a stunned manner, then grabbed Banagher

by the arms, “Over here, hurry!” he said as he started running.

“If we stay at where we are, our skin will be eroded by the wind. We have to find a rocky place to prone down for cover.”

Both of them dashed towards the rock formation they could see on the other end as if their feet were about to be tangled up. At this moment, the force of the Simoom continued to increase, and the dust that blew upon their faces and hands started to become as sharp as rasp files. Being torn to shreds by the wind; there was a sudden sense of realism in the saying, and Banagher dashed while seemingly trying to run past Zinnerman. The Simoom—the falls of sand and wild winds continued to grow until it could nearly reach the sun at the top.

The skies were darkening, and the boom that rang with the Simoom caused the ground to rumble. Banagher and Zinnerman continued to run as they dashed into a small rocky area for cover. Both of them sprawled themselves onto the ground without any time to breath, and the Simoom that were far hotter than body temperature struck the rock as the dust hitting the top let out cracking sounds. Their faces felt hot, and they would have difficulty breathing if they had not looked away from the wind.

“Use the water to dampen the cloth and cover your mouth and nose! Or else the sandy-wind will suffocate you! Close your eyes, and do not open them until I tell you to do so!”

Banagher could barely hear Zinnerman roaring voice. He undid the sunshade cloth, used the little water left to dampen it and covered the lower half of his face with it. His mouth instinctively took in the water on the cloth, and before it could enter his mouth, the hot air that was over 50 degrees blew the cloth dry. The dust that blew into the rocky ground continued to pile up, and as his body was about to be buried in the sand, he turned his face around slightly to look at the Simoom that was looming towards him.

It was a bloody-colored mix of sandy clouds. The sun had already disappeared, and there was nothing that could be heard other than the sound of the wind covering the organs. He saw Zinnerman lunge right at him and cover the head, only to end up seeing the sand being lifted off the ground. Banagher closed his eyes, and his body that was devoured by the torrent of Simoom and sand froze.

His hands that were scratched by the sand were hurting, and the wind of death came blowing over with a reddish-brown color as if it was about to roast all the organisms, blowing over the 2 bodies that were lying prone on the floor mercilessly. Banagher was terrified of his body

being lifted off the floor at any moment, and heard his heart bumping loud. Zinnerman, who was covered behind him, had his heart beating in unison, and Banagher clearly felt that the sounds of two lives resisting death were spreading through the outer world.

The sounds overwhelmed the sound of the wind, bursting through the roaring atmosphere and passing through the sky in the distant place. Banagher did hear this sound in the “Unicorn” before—*so that is the sound of my heartbeat being amplified by the machine?* At this point, he realized this fact amidst the last bit of his consciousness that was still left. *Was humanity obeying this sound and fighting against the merciless nature all this while? Humans gathered to protect their weak individual selves, established societies and developed the outer shell called civilization before finally suppressing the world? Is this groundbreaking power of life a crime? Is the long history of wars leading up to the Universal Century just a record of senseless destruction?* No, this throbbing was telling him this. *It’s too early to give an answer. We’re still a group that’s growing. Don’t end the trend.*

Dad, Mr Daguza, Mr Gilboa, I’ve built my life off their, and I’m not alone now. I have to live, I have to live on, I have to show the power and gentleness the people with knowledge and blood possessed.

The world rumbled, and the sound of the atmosphere being abused was moving far apart. What entered the bottom of his consciousness were the two throbbing sounds that overlapped each other. Banagher, who was buried by the Simoom, clenched his fists.

Part 13[edit]

It was darkness in complete silence. The seemingly frantic flapping of a bird’s wings broke this silence and darkness, causing a weak light to appear.

Banagher opened his eyes that were originally shut and looked over at the sound. He saw a pigeon, leaving footsteps on the sand as it strutted on. It stopped, stared at Banagher, tilted its head, and then continued on without being too wary. Banagher moved his body that felt like it was sealed in wax and tried to pull his head that was nearly buried in sand. Swoosh, as the sound of sand fell, Zinnerman’s arms that were draped over him landed on the ground weakly.

Zinnerman once said before that pigeons were a sign. As pigeons would not move away from a water source, it meant that there was a town or an oasis nearby if they spotted on. Banagher looked around the desert that was devoid of wind and shook his head. He then turned his eyes beside him before the sand on his hair was shaken off, and

then reached his hand towards the unmoving Zinnerman, wanted to check if the man with a beard stained white by the sand was breathing or not. The pulse was clearly beating into the fingertips pressing on the carotid, and as he heaved a sigh of relief, the sound of the pigeon suddenly flapping its wings caused his eardrums to rumble. It flew to the sky that was removed from the threat of the simoom, blocked the sun shining down for a while, and then vanished on the other side of the rocky ground.

Banagher undid the mask cloth that was covered with sand and took in fresh air. The sand entered his windpipe, and he coughed, but there was no sign of saliva dampening him. He could only care about spitting the powder-shaped sand in his mouth, supported himself off the rock and straightened his legs. He stared at the haversack that was covered with sand, controlled his swaying feet, and tried to get over to the other side of the rock to observe. The falls of red sand had subsided, and as he looked at the horizon that clearly divided the clear sky and the ground. At that moment, he felt his mind going blank.

After blinking a few times, he reached his hand out for the mouth that was blankly agape. He could feel the rough feeling of the cracked lips and the sound of the sand shaken off the hair, and once he realized that it was not an illusion, he was unable to believe his own eyes. He scampered back to the cover provided by the rock and shook Zinnerman, who was lying on the ground, several times, *Captain*, calling out in a barely audible voice. After a few times, Zinnerman suddenly opened his eyes and abruptly raised his large body that was buried in sand.

After looking around, Zinnerman turned his still seemingly unfocused eyes at Banagher, who in turn dragged him by the arm without waiting for him to move his mouth. He tried to support the large body that nearly tumbled, probably because his feet were unable to exert strength, and pulled and carried him to the other side of the rock. Zinnerman too opened his mouth in shock after seeing the horizon on the other side. He blinked his eyes that were staring at a single point, used his hand to wipe his face, patted off the sand on his beard, and leaned his neck forward while lying forward.

His face suddenly curled in a smile, and the voice that sounded like coughing echoed deep within his throat. After that, the sound that was spat out with the sand became a muffled laugh, before becoming an extremely loud laughter that echoed through the desert. *The captain sees it too. It's not a mirage.* Banagher's body finally confirmed this as he lost strength in him, and immediately collapsed onto the ground. Zinnerman, who continued to laugh, patted Banagher's back hard,

causing him to nearly fall forward. As his nerves connected within his tense face, he too started to laugh as he sensed that his face muscles could move.

He then patted Zinnerman on the back hard, letting his laughter mix in with the other man's gruff laughter. *How long has it been since I laughed out loud like this?* This sudden thought was overwhelmed by the two men's laughter as Banagher continued to laugh with all his strength. A pigeon which may or may not be the same one as before flapped its wings from another rock and flew to the blue sky on the other side of the horizon.

At the horizon it flew towards, there was a simple stone construct surrounding its edge, and the obvious greenery of coconut trees could be seen shining under the sunlight. Astal ignored the laughing duo as its scenery that probably never changed for hundreds of years appeared at a corner of the desert, clearly indicating that their journey was over.

Part 14[edit]

3 days later.

The fusion reactor rocket engine that was asleep for a week awoke, and the thrusters on the side of the ship let out a roar. A large amount of sand came rising out from the white-hot jet flames, blowing aside the hill of sand buried in the bow, and the "Garencieres" that was lying in the desert rose gradually.

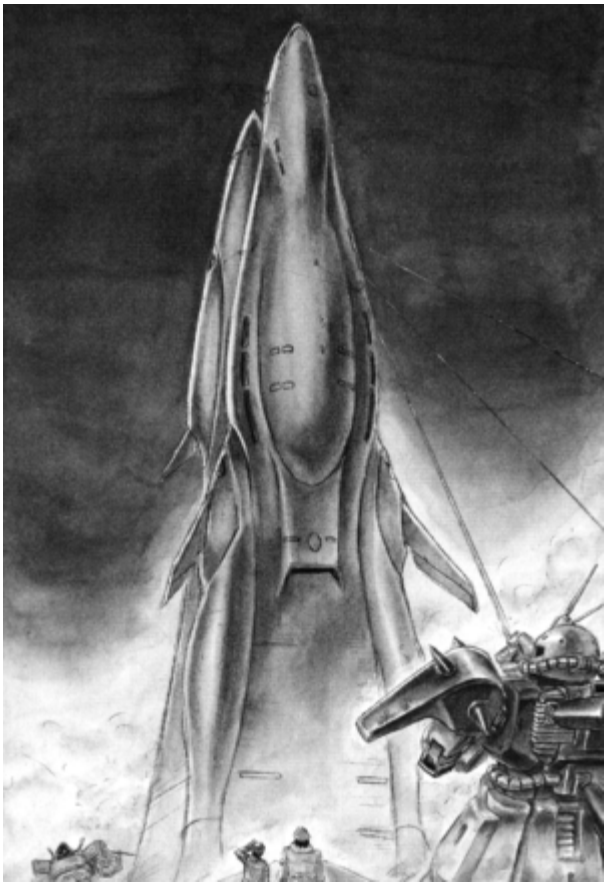
The sand clouds and dust covered the ship body that was 112m in length, and the hot wind could be felt from a 1km away. Banagher faced this storm that was stronger than the simoom, put on his goggles and covered his mouth with his hands. He could see the three wires tied to the bow of the "Garencieres" from beyond the raging sandstorm. The three giants that were originally on standby were were all desert mobile suits that were dyed a brown color, and they were moving, each pulling a wire to drag the bow of the "Garencieres".

The machine with an armored silhouette was a Zaku-type, and the short and stocky machine with a hover inside the skirt was a Dom-type. All war museums would display these two machines, so Banagher was able to distinguish between them. They were both 1st generation mobile suits, and could be considered relics from the One Year War, but they could be used for manual labor that would be the equivalent for hundreds of men in this large-scale heavy machinery lifting. The giants that were tortured by the sand and dust trampled on the ground as they dragged up the spaceship that was like a giant

whale by the portside, and the aft that was moved along was dragged out from the sandy hill as it was revealed. The aft turned towards the large hole left at the side of the ship as the “Garencieres” turned away, but this time, the wire at the aft was pulled up, and the large body of the “Garencieres” started to retreat.

There were also 3 mobile suits pulling the aft, and two of them had bodies of a caterpillar tank at the bottom, looking really strange there. The “Zaku tank” that had a “Zaku” upper body, and the arms were swapped to the easy magic hands, giving the vibe of a large and heavy construction machinery. The “Zaku tanks” were actively digging, and the “Dwadge” mobile suit that was slightly modified from the “Dom” pulled the “Garencieres” backwards as its bow was about to be lifted up. The aft was pulled to the edge of the ole, and the bow was lifted until the ship was tilting about 30 degrees. It then went past a certain point and fell into the hole due to its own weight. As it was about to fall into this 25m hole, the aft that was acting as support was immediately lifted vertically, causing a deep buzzing that rang throughout the desert around them. The thick cloud of dust that gushed out covered the “Garencieres”, and there was the sound of cheers and applause around them.

“Alright, good work!” Zinnerman let out a delighted call to the wireless communicator. Banagher waited for the sand to subside before taking off his goggles, and looked back at the “Garencieres” body that was lifted vertically. The VTOL ship landed perfectly under gravity conditions, and looked like a rocket ready to launch into space. Once the fuel it required was filled, the “Garencieres” should be able to launch whenever it wanted to.



It had been 2 days since he barely made contact through the phone in Astal, and the Zeon remnants and the people from Mauritania. The “Garencieres” was finally pulled up with strengthened wires attached based on the ship’s calculated toughness and a dug hole, a result of the work of mobile suits that worked tirelessly. “Amazing…” Banagher could only exclaim with honest amazement. Excluding the part that was sunk in the pothole, the “Garencieres” that stood in the desert was still 90m tall, about the height of a 40 story building, and one would think of the large Tower of Babel that appeared in the Bible. It seemed Zinnerman had the same feeling as well as he looked up at his ship a while after his contact with the wireless communicator. His face was saying, “Now we can get out of this damned place”, and he was filled with emotions as the word relieved would not be able to describe it completely.

“I want to thank you. If not for you, I might have collapsed out of fatigue on the way.”

That face suddenly spoke up calmly, causing Banagher to feel

shocked. Banagher thought about how since he mentioned it at this point, they had not talked to each other. “Since when…” he felt his face heating up as he immediately answered, and his stare escaped towards the mobile suits that were walking loudly.

“I didn’t do anything. All I did was to pull you down.”

“Not exactly. It feels different to have someone I can talk to on the way. Your stubbornness is really quite an eye opener.”

Zinnerman smiled once he met Banagher slightly in the eyes. It seemed that all the suffering they went through paid off as well, and Banagher felt doubtful about his own feelings as he lowered his head. Behind them, Flaste seemed to have heard their conversation, “Man”, as he shrugged his shoulders.

“There goes the captain’s bad habit again. Is the Garencieres going to have a new member?”

Flaste showed a wry grin at Banagher, and it was not full of spite like the previous few days. These unexpected words entered their hearts, and Banagher looked back at Zinnerman’s face in a flustered manner. Zinnerman himself avoided the stare as he glared at Flaste, saying, “Is it fine for you to dilly-dally around like this?”

“They’re guerillas, but they’re an organization basically made up of illegal residents. Watch carefully and don’t let them wreck the ship.”

“Okay okay okay, I’ll try to be the demon supervisor… THAT “ZAKU” OVER THERE! DIDN’T I SAY THAT IT’S TOO EARLY TO RELEASE THE ROPE!?”

Flaste yelled into the wireless communicator as his face really became that of a demon supervisor as he ran right at the mobile suit that was moving around the sand. Banagher stared at the back profile that looked really carefree; and carelessly thought that they might be able to get along. However, he again felt a sense of doubt with this sense of belonging he seemed to have found. “Every unit is to hurry up with the checks. We’ll leave the desert tomorrow.” Zinnerman spoke behind Banagher, who looked up at the “Garencieres” that looked dazzling in the sun.

The “Unicorn” is sleeping inside there. I suppose we’ll be searching for the “Box” once we are ready to move out. Logically, the Federation army won’t sit back and watch this. Since there’re many mobile suits mobbing, they’ve probably grasped our movements. More than half of the Zeon remnants are guerilla organizations with illegal residents, but they’re not to be underestimated. If these people assist in the search

for the “Box”, it’s not hard to imagine that Earth will be caught in a commotion again.

So, what should I do at that moment? Banagher let the sky enter his eyes as he recalled the crew members of the “Nahel Argama” that felt exceptionally distant. And then, a pair of emerald eyes suddenly appeared in his mind. Audrey Burne—the girl called Mineva Zabi was on Earth as well. She was definitely bothered and hesitant somewhere under this sky.

I really want to meet. The thought that rose from deep within clung onto Banagher’s heart, and as he clenched without much of a aim, the sound of a jet engine was mixed in together with the sound of the wind. Banagher immediately got into a defensive position as he looked around, and saw a small machine appearing from behind a sand dune.

It was an old VTOL carrier, and was similar to an old Cessna-class as it flew over Banagher’s head as he was watching. “Don’t worry, that machine contacted us.” Zinnerman said from behind, and Banagher looked where it flew. The VTOL carrier whiffed up sand and dust beside the “Zaku Tank” at the mobile suits the remnant army sent over, and landed with refined movements on the sandy ground, in front of the “Desert Zakus” that were tied in wires. The hatch on the side of the machine opened, and a person clad in black got up from the pilot seat.

The slender figure swayed amidst the mirage as it was covered in black cloth. Banagher saw that ethnic Arabian attire on television before… *Is that a local?* He stared at the silhouette that approached, identified the color of the eyes that were revealed between the gap of the clothes, and gasped, as the emerald eyes similar to Audrey’s were right in front of me.

“You’re Captain Suberoa Zinnerman, right?”

The silhouette ignored Banagher, who gulped, and asked with a clear voice. “That’s me. Who’re you?” Zinnerman answered, and the visitor removed the cloth below her nose.

“I’m Loni Garvey. I’m here on my father’s behest.”

Her brown face showed the same sparkling eyes as Audrey, and Banagher felt that she was of a similar age as his. He reflected on the beautiful-sounding name, and harbored a pressurized feeling while staring at the side of the girl’s face. Beside him, Zinnerman widened his eyes, “Father…I see, so you’re Madhi Garvey’s daughter?” Loni suddenly smiled and said,

“My father wants to meet you. Please come along with me.”

“It really doesn’t matter, but where is Mr Madhi?”

“He booked a hotel at Dakar.”

Zinnerman immediately showed a change in expression the moment he heard these unexpected words, “…Sound doesn’t sounds like we’re talking about business here.” In response, Loni kept the smile in her eyes. Banagher had a premonition about this and closed his jaw slightly.

“We heard of the information regarding the “Box”. The next coordinates indicated by the Laplace Program is Dakar…it seems that my father set up an appointment there to discuss with you.”

These words caused Banagher to recall what he forgot in his mind. The guide leading to the “Box”, the Laplace Process, had showed a new coordinates—and while Banagher turned his head inadvertently, Zinnerman did not look over at him as he turned his tense bearded face at Loni, saying “I understand, please wait for me to get prepared”, before leaving the place. Banagher felt that something was falling out of his grasp, but was unable to say anything as he watched the other man leave. “Are you the pilot of the ‘breaking horn’?” At this moment, Loni asked, and Banagher’s shoulders shuddered in shock the moment he heard it.

“‘Breaking horn’?”

“Isn’t that the mobile suit you’re piloting? I heard that it’ll split its horn, and the machine will become a “Gundam”.”

Loni showed her white teeth as she said that, and her adult-like expression which had a childish glint caused Banagher to gulp.

“You’re young, just like what I heard. If possible, you should come along?”

“Me too…?”

“You’re a Spacenoid, right? It’s not like you’ll lose anything if you visit Dakar. That is the capital of our enemy…the Federation government anyway.”

Loni turned around without waiting for Banagher to answer. Banagher wanted to argue that he did not think that way, but his voice was stuck in his throat as he could only watch Loni’s lean and petite figure. The new coordinates shown by the Laplace Program was at the capital of the Federation government, Dakar. He could not comprehend the meaning behind this, but he knew that things were spiraling downwards as he looked up at the “Garencieres” lifted before him. The

dusty and sandy wind blew by, teasing his body for being unable to think of a next step.

Chapter 2[edit]

Part 1[edit]

Marida Cruz was pushed hard by the back, and nearly fell as she barely managed to stand upright. The door was then closed, and the loud sound rang behind her.

There was darkness all around her. From the echo, she knew that she was in a rather wide place. Marida Cruz was not so reckless as to make a careless move, and she first closed her eyes, took a deep breath, let her eyes get used to the darkness, and scanned the place. There were no windows or anything similar inside this room, and she could see that there was a firefighting installation lamp. It was dark and hard to tell, but the ceiling was shockingly high. *Is this a mobile suit hangar?* The moment she thought about that, the handcuffs locking her hands let out a slight sound, and she felt them fall off.

(Ple Twelve)

The handcuffs that were remotely removed dropped onto the floor, and a woman's voice rang through the darkness. Marida's body jerked as she used her sight to track the source of this sound.

(That is your name, right? Answer me. You should obey your master's instructions.)

The voice that echoed throughout was mixed in with the darkness, striking Marida's heart and soul. *Is this a new kind of experiment?* Marida recalled the checks she went through for the past 10 days as her body and even her mind were cruelly investigated, and she inadvertently clenched her fists that were free. The continued use of drugs in the experiments caused her head to hurt, but she felt that her body had recovered to the point of adapting to the 1G gravity. She was only wearing a thin surgical tunic, but her movements were rather unrestrained.

If they had any intent to check on her body functions, it would not be a bad idea for her to move as much as possible and treat it as rehabilitation. Marida exerted strength on her legs that might turn limp if she relaxed, "You're not my master." and answered with a calm voice. At that moment, there was a flash that came from the front, seemingly with a voice, and her sights were dyed completely white.

Marida inadvertently raised her hands to block and narrowed her eyes to stare at the source of light. Her vision that recovered several times faster than an ordinary person showed two silhouettes with their backs facing the light. She could see the silhouette of a woman and a short stocky man with the many lightings instruments behind them, walking towards her. *Is the man Alberto Vist?* Marida thought secretly as she stared at the duo that were undefended, not wielding handguns or tasers, and her body froze as she took the stare that was several times more intense.

The woman's blond hair looked rather dazzling with the light against her, and she stared right at Marida. "It's dangerous." Alberto said as he tugged at the woman by the sleeve, "It's fine." but was shaken aside by the woman who answered this. Her feet that were wearing the high-heeled shoes stood about 3m away from Marida.

"This girl can't protect herself on her own without her master's instructions."

Just like what she heard at first, that voice with a heavy pressure surrounded Marida. The woman did not look away from her as her lips that had lipstick on curled up, saying, "Isn't that right?"

"If that's not the case, it's impossible for her to be tortured till such an inhumane state, and she can possibly escape whenever she wants to, right?"

The woman lowered her stare at Marida's stomach, her pale and skinny face showing no signs of pity. If the woman had read through the results of the checks, she would definitely know that Marida's body was "incomplete" in some sense. At that moment, Marida deeply felt the humiliation that caused her body to tremble, but she immediately turned her lips into a smile, "It seems that I'm being misunderstood here." and said to the woman with a restrained tone,

"I am a Neo Zeon officer now. I have a duty to protect myself as a soldier. I don't need a master to instruct me."

"I can choose to take you as a hostage and escape from this disgusting experimental facility." Marida expressed this meaning with silence as she darted her eyes to look at the dark space in front of her that looked like a hangar. "Impressive." The woman answered as she gave Marida an unwavering stare.

"But you sure are pitiful, having to come up with such a reason to protect yourself."

"Pitiful…?"

“That’s because you’re trapped by the logic of men. Don’t you feel that we women should live more freely?”

The testing eyes of the woman relaxed slightly, and she smiled as she stepped towards Marida, who inadvertently backed away.

She was similar to the people Marida saw in the filthy Red Light district filled with sour stench—and she definitely could not allow herself to let her guard down against these people who would smile in such a way. They would first let the other party relax before going rough. Marida was able to sense the fear almost instinctively, and she gathered her concentration on the woman’s actions under her emotions. However, “I am Martha Vist Carbine.” the voice rang, shocking her.

“I’m not a soldier, and I’m not a researcher here. There’s something I want to ask of you.”

The woman’s tone was different from before as it had a business-like flair. She reached her hand forward, and Alberto, who waited on standby like a shadow, approached her, and handed the notepad terminal over. Then, the woman who called herself Martha showed what she was doing. There was a 3-panel display of a mobile suit, and Marida’s stare was fixated on the display before she could even think.

It was the silhouette of a Federation-styled machine; and the head that formed its features and the unique structure of this machine were even more unmistakable to Marida. “This is…” Marida gasped as she saw this, and Martha did not look away from her once as she said with a hard and stern voice, “We call it the “Banshee”.”

“I hope that you’ll become its pilot.”

The face that spoke was vastly different from those of the residents in the Red Light district, and looked like a powerful elite who had established her authority. Marida could not believe her instincts at first, and looked cautiously at Martha.

“I suppose you understand very well that this isn’t a machine that a pilot can use. Only a completed Cyber-Newtype like you will be able to accomplish this, and you can definitely fulfill its capabilities to 100%...or even more.”

Martha closed the terminal and handed it over to Alberto behind her. Marida felt an intimidating chill from the determined look deep within the cold light in her expression.

“The problem is that you are too complete, and it’s hard for us to carry out adjustments on you. However, I feel that a pilot like this is able to

become the pilot of the “Banshee”. It is not in my interest to put in a puppet whose memories can be swapped easily. What I want is…”

The skin of a powerful elite was shed away, and Martha again showed a smile that was hard to comprehend. *What exactly is with this woman?* Marida’s face felt a chill as she saw the finger that was as thin as a lath approach her, and she forcefully waved it aside.

“I said that I’m a Neo Zeon officer. There’s no reason for me to help you.”

“That’s just you trying to convince yourself that. Your soul actually wants to fly somewhere else…”

“Even so, I don’t want to fly in the place you provide. You might as well readjust me or interrogate me if you want me to help you.”

This woman is dangerous. Marida was able to sense this as she felt an irritating poison on her that would spread to everyone related to her. “Y, you, you should watch your mouth there…” Marida immediately gave an antagonistic look at Martha while ignoring Alberto who said this with an agitated voice. At that moment, the smile disappeared off Martha’s face, and she bellowed, “You shut up!”

Alberto’s silhouette could be seen with the backlight, his shoulders trembling. At the next moment, Martha’s expression then broke into a smile as she stared at Alberto that said, “you should understand, right?”

“This is a conversation between women. We have to listen to what she has to say, right?”

Martha’s stared at Alberto and his outstretched arm, and patted down his abdomen to the lower abdomen. This alone cause Alberto’s strength to be sucked away from Martha, and as he cringed like a dog with its tail between its legs, Marida immediately looked away from them.

Their relationship was not just that of superior and subordinate, and they were not just relatives. Marida could sense some sort of twisted rotten presence of a man and a woman—and Martha quickly shot a heinous stare over that was about to pierce her, causing her to look in front in shock.

“This girl’s instincts as a woman are enhanced too? What a troublesome woman…!”

Even though you’re just a created being. Martha gave such an unexpected tone from her expression and raised her right hand above

her head. The hand that was raised did not swing down at her as this time, the lights in front of Marida went out, and the ones at the back lit up the dark and dim hangar. The object that was shrouded in darkness appeared in front of Marida's eyes, causing her to be unable to breath for a few seconds.

The indigo colored machine that looked like a gathering of darkness had its limbs lying weakly, and it had a wrecked monoeye and a burnt black head. It was definitely a mobile suit, but the curved profile clearly indicated that it was not a Federation mobile suit. The two elegant flower-like large binders on its shoulders and the refined profile on the front end of their toes were part of a product of civilization not created under Earth's gravity—what would be called the embodiment of Zeonism appeared right in front of her eyes. After the war, the Zeon remnants that escaped to the asteroid belt built this machine to preserve their memories of their country. In a way, it could be viewed as a symbol of Zeon. There was paranoia and nostalgia in this abnormally shaped machine…

"This is the mass-produced "Qubeley", a machine *all of you* piloted."

Martha said. Marida's heart beat her chest wildly, and she was unable to breathe easily as she clutched onto her tunic.

That's right, that's the machine I, we *rode on. It can be considered part of our bodies, and it should have been destroyed with my sisters, so why did it appear here? Whose machine was it?* Marida felt puzzled. The machine serial number on the left torso was burnt black and unidentifiable , and the serial number at the legs could not be seen as they were blocked by the shadow of the toes. The binders on its shoulders were sagging weakly, and the giant leaned on the wall as it slumped down. Marida carefully examined the giant, and her sights were laid on the cockpit hatch. She stared right at it, not moving at all. The force of the explosion was enough to cause the hatch to explode, but the ejection pod showed no signs of shooting out. The machine did not take a direct hit, and the dim cockpit that was opened looked completely intact. *Maybe there might be other survivors—*

Suddenly, she felt goosebumps, and there was a sense of disgust rising up in her. *Impossible.* Her body that was crying this out started to tremble wildly, and she hurriedly looked away from the machine in front of her. She did not know why her body showed such a rejection that was so strong she could not believe it. Perhaps there was some

other lifeform like her existing on this world, and for some reason, Marida felt disgusted by this biologically.

It felt like a nightmare becoming reality. As she was driven by this suffocating fear, she subconsciously backed off. *No, I won't be able to remain as myself if I stay here. I have to leave this place as far as possible. I have to hurry and get away from here.* She thought.

"Look closely."

Marida got grabbed by the arm, and her body that was being forcefully dragged entered Martha's clutches, and her chin was held as she was forced to face the machine.

"That's how you look. You're still inside the cockpit of that machine. Even if you want to act as the human called Marida Cruz, your soul is still imprisoned in there."

The dark opening of the cockpit entered her eyes, but she was unable to close them. She could shake the hand off if she wanted to, but her body could not exert strength at all. *Stop it!* Her own intent was unable to become a voice, and she could only face her separate identity helplessly.

"Do you know why that's so? That's because you're a product of men's logic. You were created by men, who only know how to fight until their heads bleed, as a tool of war. You're created from a woman's womb, so don't you find it unnatural?"

Marida was sweating, and her heart was beating faster. *That's right, I'm just a tool. Once I lost my purpose for battle, I could only be used to satisfy men's lusts* there was a thought that brewed in her body, shocking her so badly that she started to twist and struggle. Martha's hand however remained unmoved as her thin fingertips that were pressing Marida's face spread their icy body temperature onto her.

"But no matter the origin, it doesn't matter. You do exist as yourself after all, and there's no need for you to restrain yourself to fulfill men's logic. Let me bring you out of that machine."

Martha's icy cold fingertips went down from the face to the throat, and then stroked past the curves in front of the chest. Marida felt like her strength was sapped away completely as she tried her best to stand straight.

"The world outside is interesting too. There won't be anything that will restrain you, and you can use your own strength freely. As long as I have this strength of yours, it will be possible to restructure this world.

Come with me. Let's walk out of this dark place and save this world that follows men's logic and is heading to its doom ."

The lips that broke into a smile curled up, and Martha showed a grudging look in her gloomy eyes. The "Qubeley" that had its monoeye blown off overlapped with her face, and Marida could not help but let out a voiceless scream.

Part 2[edit]

The club for the tee shot swung down, and the unique sound of a hard ball gliding through the wind as it passed through the sky highly. The ball that was sent flying flew above the fairway entered the blue sky, and the eyes could not find it.

To an outsider, this shot was nicely hit, and there was a little applause from the crowd. The man understood that this should be a form of etiquette, but he did not understand golf at all, and he had no intent of mixing around with the crowd just like that. Bright Noa stared at the back of the man, Ronan Marcenas, standing at the tee ground, who picked up the tee and handed the club to his caddy. Ronan seemed to notice Bright's stare as he exchanged some words with the elderly man at the tee ground and showed a smile while keeping a sharp look on Bright.

"This way, please."

Patrick Marcenas, who was standing beside Ronan, seemed to notice his intent and whispered. Once he heard the news from the Senate Council, the son-in-law went right to the dock at Sasebo to welcome Bright, not forgetting to introduce himself as the public secretary as he led the other man as someone working behind the scenes. Bright understood that Patrick was showing respect to him, and he did not show any signs of actual contempt under his polite and attentive appearance, but he felt uneasy about this overly exaggerated method that was used. Leaving aside this, there was also no reason why he had to meet Ronan, let alone wait for him on a golf course.

Ronan, who was wearing a pink polo shirt and a visor, withdrew himself from his golf buddies and sat on the passenger seat of the cart. With the overly serious look from Patrick behind, Bright walked towards the man, and adjusted the tie he was unused to wearing. He continued to remain still, partly to annoy. Ronan stared at the dazzling greenery on the course, "Sorry to make you come all the way here." and spoke up first.

“I wanted to invite you to our house, but unfortunately, the outside world is sticking its eyes too tightly on us.”

“No…what would you, as the chairman of the Settlement Issues Council, have with a soldier like me?”

Bright restrained his tone, but still expressed his intent. Ronan moved his face slightly and gave a sharp probing look on the other man. “You don’t play this?” after asking that, he turned his sights to the wide golf course.

“This isn’t popular in space.”

Bright felt that his answer was not appropriate, but he had nothing else to answer. At that moment, the sound of the wind could be heard as the next player swung the next shot, and Ronan applauded courteously as he said with a wry look, “You’re really an honest man!”

“It’s good to know that you’re a man just like what they said, but at this point, I really have to ask you to play along for now. I hope that you’ll call me as if you’re familiar with me. The car’s waiting at the

clubhouse."

The sharp glance briefly showed the majesty Ronan had as a heavyweight politician, as he then showed a casual smile as he got up from the golf cart. At that moment, his fat body swayed slightly as he nearly tumbled onto the ground with his knee. Bright wanted to reach out his arm to help, only to see Ronan's fat face look right back at him and wink with a smile. Having understood that the 'skit' had started, he frowned. "What's wrong?" the other players asked as they showed their concern.

"It's fine, don't worry. I've not been feeling well this morning."

"That won't do. Do you want to head back first?"

"I guess, since I managed to pull quite a lead in the last round…"

With the caddy supporting him, Ronan sat on the golf cart. Bright did not look at the back of the man as he exchanged looks with Patrick, did not look at the other players who seemed like influential figures as he left the tee ground.

There was an impressive looking clubhouse after they went by the lush green carpet of the 7th hole. To soldiers, who did not have much hope in standing out, there were not many chances for them to walk amidst Mother Nature, let alone step onto a member-only golf course. Bright refused to sit on the cart together with Patrick, who invited him on, and decided to walk to the clubhouse as Ronan, who would reach back earlier, would need some time to change clothing. Since there were eyes from the 'outside world' watching, Bright determined that it would be best if they did not move at the same time.

Bright was invited to ride on the private jet at the Sasebo factory located in the Eastern half of Asia, and more than 6 hours passed before he reached the golf course in Atlanta on North America. The radiating and dazzling light that was shining down here gave a sense of appropriate greenery, and it felt completely different from the light humid air in the Far East. The green fields on the golf course were lined up neatly like how it was in a colony, but they did not give the feeling that they were able to hide the climate of the landscape. This lifeforce that could not be restrained was Earth's characteristic, and as Bright understood that he was amongst this, his unhappiness over being summoned here out of a sudden was more or less quelled. Thinking back, he realized that he had been moving between the dark ship bridge and the docks ever since he came to Earth, and did not manage to walk under the sun properly for once. He viewed this as a temporary solace; that it was not a bad idea to bask in the forest of a

high-class golf course. To him, who was in the latter half of the 30s, a lack of exercise was an issue he could not take lightly.

But once he takes a step out of this place, he would have no choice but to understand the intention why Ronan summoned him. As the commander of the independent force Londo Bell, the politicians would view him as a pawn that could be summoned easily. Since the other party had arranged this private meeting through a minister of the General Staff, there had to be some reason why the other party took the trouble to look for him. The situation was such that they had to keep it a secret from the media and even the stares from the government—either way, he hoped not to be ferried to the Marcenas mansion forcefully by being stuffed into the trunk. As he played around with this imagination that could not be considered a joke, he strolled past the turf that was mysteriously trimmed neatly. The strong sunlight of Southern USA caused his head, which was still not used to the jet lag, to hurt somewhat.

Part 3[edit]

At this time, there were quite a few ships equipped with Minovsky Particle Engines. An I-field was a forcefield that was created through the Minovsky Particles that were formed by the engines, and the Spacecraft had an I-field that covered the bottom of the ship, lifting the Minovsky Craft through the recoil caused by the conductive material. All spacecrafts could operate within the atmosphere through this product of Minovsky physics. In other words, the era of ‘space battleships’ flying in the skies of Earth had come.

However, except for a minority, those spacecrafts lacked the ability to return back to earth. Even if they could use the Ballute to enter Earth, they could not leave the gravity field with their own thrusters and enter space again. That would be due to the insufficient output from a Minovsky Craft. Once it landed onto, it would require an external force like a booster or a mass driver to send it back into space. As they resembled the Earth orbital fleet, operation flexibility and costs were issues that were commonly deemed necessary for improvement as soon as possible.

In the end, there was a short-term goal to develop low input high output Minovsky crafts that was basically achieved the previous year. This engine that was the basis for the new generation was first installed on the flagship of Londo Bell, “Ra Cailum”, and was to be tested under gravitational conditions. The commander of this ship was also the commander of Londo Bell, Captain Bright Noa, and most likely, Bright’s personal experiences played a part in his nomination.

During the One Year War, there was a spacecraft with a Minovsky craft on it that had the ability to return to Earth. It was one of the few exceptions— the Pegasus-class assault landing carrier “White Base”, and after the war, this ship was hailed as a symbol of the Federation army’s victory, and under such conditions, Bright was promoted to Captain.

A young man who was almost 20 years old was made a candidate officer due to the circumstances of battle, was ordered to command the first mobile suit mothership that Federation had, and finally became a crucial member of the final counterattack. These heroic exploits highlighted the end of the great War, but to him, this was simply a result of coincidence. It was coincidence that the port was attacked by the Zeon forces, that all the important crew members, including the captain, were killed; it was also coincidence that he led a few lucky survivors, some refugee civilians inside the ship, but were able to break through the enemy forces as a single ship and attracted the attention of the Zeon army; and it was a coincidence amongst coincidences that the prototype mobile suit that was recently completed at that time, the RX 78-2 “Gundam” was able to create astounding accomplishments, to a point that the entire Zeon army called it the “White Devil”. Without these coincidences, the High Command of the Federation military would not have set their eyes on “White Base”, and Bright would most probably be deployed to other positions. If he was not forced to lead the ship alone as bait, he would not have ended up being a crucial figure in the final battle, and the responsibility that rested on him at this point would naturally belong to someone else.

But in fact, the reputation of “White Base” had spread throughout the land. The ex-captain was nominated for this experiment because the mass-production plan of new Minovsky crafts with equivalent capabilities was began. Thus, Bright secretly wondered that his life was controlled by the coincidence that happened 17 years ago, as a man like Ronan caught sight of him and invited him to his private residence to talk. He was not stuffed into the trunk, but he held his breath for almost an hour in the limousine that had tinted glass on it. He walked through the doors of the Marcenas’ residence, and finally met Ronan face to face with the afternoon sun shining into the office. Patrick waited for a short while before heading back to the election firm, and nobody else came in after the old butler served tea. The atmosphere in the office that had the flair of long history this political family had felt really heavy with only 2 people, pressing down on his mind and body that had no affinity for politics.

However, the greenery of trees that could be seen through the windows were stunning, and Bright could only concern himself with looking outside the window before Ronan sat down on the sofa opposite. The verdant forest that surrounded the mansion was different from the thoroughly protected greenery of a golf course, radiating a charm that seemed like it would swallow the entire land fully if it was left alone. Bright recalled that his wife once mentioned that the sunlight had its own flavor. There was light shining inside the colony, reflected off mirrors, but they did not have any flavor. In contrast, one could smell the unique flavor the sunlight had on Earth, and she did mention that it was a presence even science could not determine that Earth became a nursery of life. No matter how they recreated an environment similar to Earth, it would be impossible for them to create Life even after a billion years—

“Your son is studying Botany in High School, right?”

It seemed that Ronan detected Bright’s feelings as he sat down on the sofa in the office and spoke up. Feeling somewhat panicky in his heart, Bright turned his eyes to the front and answered, “Yes, you do know.” as he seemed like he was stumped for words.

“I sent someone to investigate before. This stretch still has some vegetation that was from the old centuries. If you’re interested, you can bring him along here. I can recommend a job for him if he has any intent to become a vegetation inspector.”

Ronan’s stare showed no other intent, but these words clearly showed the clear disparity in identities between them unconditionally. Bright sensed that the other man was really intending to pull him over, and answered back with a cautious voice “Hm…”

“You have a daughter at home as well. Your wife was the former steering operator of “White Base”, and I heard that she’s a direct relative of the president of Yashima heavy duty Company.”

“That was all the in the past as she gave up on the right to take over.”

Bright’s tone sounded like he wanted to interrupt, and seemed to clearly show Ronan that he had an overly clean life. Ronan gave a wry smile and continued, “If we mention about your exploits, Captain, you were made the commander of “White Base” at a young age, and became the captain of a military shuttle later on. During the Gryps Conflict, you joined the Anti-Earth Union Group and clashed against the infamous Titans numerous times. Your name had spread far and wide during the 2 Neo Zeon Wars, and now you’re the commander of Londo Bell…I never expected you to have no ambitions for politics

even though you have such talent."

"Talent?"

"Looking at your experience and popularity, Captain, the public and organizations will embrace you. No matter how dire the area is, you will definitely be elected as long as our political party is supporting from behind."

Ronan showed a smile and closed his mouth for the time being. Bright did not expect the other man to flatter him, and could only take a sip of red tea.

"Even though that kind of response from you is worthy of recognition… well, that's good. It's because you're such a person that I want to request something out of you."

Ronan opened the document file beside him and handed it over. *Looks like we're getting straight to the point now,* Bright thought as he briefly browsed through the file that was not considered thick.

It seemed to be the data of a space merchant ship the ship management authority had, and it contained the specifics of the shipping company. There were photos of its registration that were submitted, some battlefields, and what looked like a photo of the ship in question rushing into the atmosphere included inside. It was hard to tell, but one could see something like a mobile suit on the red-hot ship body.

"This is a disguised merchant ship of the "Sleeves". It landed on Earth approximately 10 days ago."

Ronan said, and Bright looked back at the photo of the merchant ship called the "Garencieres".

"Currently, the army, navy and air force are all searching for it. I hope that your ship can join in their search."

The test-ship "Ra Cailum" did not receive any orders to mobilize, but Bright had already heard from the Senate Council of the news about Federation army fighting against Neo Zeon in a skirmish, causing the relic of "Laplace" to be destroyed. Bright could not help but lift his head, but could only hold in his words and shut his mouth the moment he heard Ronan continue, "I have another condition."

"I hope that you can find it faster than any other squads searching for it and act according to my orders. Of course, I will try my best to allow you to move as and when you please, and I'll send any information I get to you first."

“In other words, you want to use the “Ra Cailum” for your personal use?”

This is ridiculous. You’re basically acting like a warlord here. Bright did not restrain the disgust he had immediately as he put the closed file onto the table. Ronan then narrowed his eyes, “I heard that when Earth is in crisis, Londo Bell is a squad that can make decisions on its own and take action.” and immediately continued to say.

“I hope you can understand that now is the moment. This is an operation we have to hide from the internal government, and I can’t leave it to an officer who might mistake this as a military duty for promotions.”

“I’m really troubled that you overrate me as such. I’m just someone who stepped onto an unorthodox path coincidentally, and in fact—”

“that’s because you’re the commander of a Newtype squad, and as a soldier, this title caused you to be looked over based on pragmatic reasons. Am I right?”

These words passed through Bright’s chest, and Ronan’s stare at him felt exceptionally sharp. Bright could not answer immediately as he secretly clenched the fists on his knees tightly.

“The names of the “Gundam” and “White Base” are still well known today. After that, you became the captain of the Gundam-type mobile suits mother ships, so it is not inconceivable for the Federation to think that you’re the commander of a Newtype squad. You are reliable, but looking at your nature, you are a double-edged sword that can form a threat to the Federation…that’s most likely what the Senate Council appraise you as, that if not used well, you might end up hurting them, and it might not be an exaggeration to say that you’re similar to a nuclear weapon.”

“A nuclear weapon, is it…?”

Bright could not help but give a wry look the moment he heard this exaggerated description of him. If “Gundam” pilots through many generations who had Newtype abilities could be seen as a coincidence, it would be a coincidence that he was in charge of him. But no matter how much he tried to explain, he could not overturn the results that were public to the world, and he could not gain Ronan’s agreement. This experience was something he clearly understood.

Most importantly, Ronan was clearly hoping that he, who separated himself from worldly affairs, would be on the same page, “If you show too much of your abilities, you’ll end up inviting disaster, and your

situation is an example of this." Bright could hear some form of compassion from his tone as he stared at the face of this politician in front of him.

"If you're willing, I can recommend you to Central…but I won't bother saying such opportunistic words since you most probably won't wish for it. However, the problems caused by this disguised merchant ship have something to do with "Industrial 7" and "Palau". As the commander of Londo Bell, I suppose you'll be concerned about the safety of the "Nahel Argama", right?

The moment Bright looked forward, a powerful hit struck him hard. The "Nahel Argama" itself was entrusted a mission from the Senate Council, and its whereabouts were a mystery to its original affiliation, Londo Bell. Even as Bright questioned the current situation, the Council would only say that all details were classified and would not reveal their whereabouts. The High Council too remained silent of this, and any attempts to gather information through the political route were completely useless. The situation was suspicious enough for him to catch that something was amiss, and he wondered if the ship had anything to do with the recent terrorist attacks, but Ronan told him that everything he thought had enough was true.

I see, so this is what he's planning. Bright himself noticed him he was completely baited as he glared over. Ronan however did not mind as he continued with a calm tone, emphasizing, "Since I don't want to feel that I'm using a hostage on you, I'll tell you everything."

"The "Nahel Argama" is delayed on Earth's orbit, and it's something the Vist Foundation pulled through the Senate Council. Have you heard of the Vist Foundation?"

"I did hear of rumors…"

"They're also looking for where the disguised ship is. If we can find this disguised ship first, we'll be able to have an advantage over the Vist Foundation. This will not only ensure that the "Nahel Argama" can return to its original squad, but also clear out all the cadres in the Senate Council who are allies of the Foundation. Only a soldier like you can carry out this kind of work. Do you understand what I mind?"

"I do understand that this is a chance to reverse the fortunes…but what's the problem with that disguised ship?"

"The "Laplace Box"."

Ronan immediately lost his smile the moment he said these words. Bright swallowed the shocking words in his heart as he looked back at

the face in front of him.

“That disguised ship has an item that was called as such. It’ll be best if we can ensure that item, and if there are difficulties, I hope that you destroy it. I allow any forms of actions taken for this aim.”

Ronan looked back at him, and his eyes that were not showing any glitter showed no doubts that he was not joking. Bright vaguely understood that this was not some bother that was saddled with for no reason, and looked away from Ronan.

The conservative sector of the Federation and the Vist Foundation had already ingrained themselves deeply inside the Senate Council, starting a secret battle over the “Laplace Box”. If he interfered, he would end up in this savage war of politics. While it was not difficult for him to apologize and refuse, how would he be able to bring back the “Nahel Argama” if he refused? He, as the commander of a non-mainstream force, was rather popular amongst the Defense Ministry Senators who were basically his employers, so if he made use of this relationship—no, the Vist Foundation would immediately know this and block his actions through some means. Politics was a profession based on building relations, and there were no politicians who did not owe others favors. If he started to interfere, the government would start to count favors, and his avenues of investigation would naturally fade out. Once a transaction happened while a soldier could not interfere, the truth would always be hidden.

Simply put, the “Nahel Argama” had treaded into a ditch, and he could not ensure the safety of the crew, let alone let them return. *Am I to follow the political route I have no hope in, or do I approach this situation with the mindset of jumping into this ditch as well?* Bright sensed that he could not make up his mind, and looked back at Ronan, who did a little guess through his eyes, lowered his head and said as he got up, “Oh yes, I have someone I want you to meet.”

Ronan took up the phone on the table and spoke into the receiver, “Call him in.” A few moments later, there was the sound of knocking as a young man walked into the room, shocking Ronan. He was not concerned about the deep grey officer uniform the young man was wearing, nor was he concerned about him standing with the cap tucked under his armpit, but that for some reason, the stiff-looking brown eyes gave a similar impression to that of Ronan’s.

There was an ensign lapel pin glittering below the boyish-looking face, indicating that he was recently assigned. “I’m Ensign Riddhe Marcenas.” The young man raised his hand to salute, and on hearing that, Bright recovered as he stood up to salute before looking over at

Ronan. “As you expect, this is my incompetent son.” Ronan said this while giving a wry look, and soon looked away from that young man’s face as he sat down on the sofa again.

“You might think of it as spoiling my own son here, but can he ride on your ship? He’s actually a pilot of Londo Bell.”

The tense handsome young man did not look at his father as he merely stared at one point. At this mention, Bright remembered that he inadvertently heard from someone that the son of a Senate Council member was assigned to a squad in Londo Bell. He searched his memory, recalled the name of the squad he was assigned to, and hid the wavering in his heart as he stared at the boy’s face. “Ensign Riddhe…I remember you’re assigned to the “Nahel Argama”, right?” he asked as he glanced over at Ronan.

“Yes. I’m currently removed from the squad, and I’m now on standby.” Ronan ignored this answer from Ensign Riddhe as he showed a vague expression to Bright. *Does he want his own son to check on me?* Leaving aside how Riddhe managed to leave the “Nahel Argama” alone, Bright understood again that things were set up too perfectly, and endured the sign in him as he stare back at the ensign in front of him. The brown eyes were showing a form of tension different from nervousness as Riddhe too looked back at Bright’s face.

“We’re also testing the new model mobile suits. There’s no other mobile suit for a pilot on the “Ra Cailum” left, you know?”

“Don’t worry. The Senate Council sent a prototype mobile suit for me. If there’s space on the deck, please allow me to use it.”

Even the mobile suit is assigned? Bright could not even raise the strength to be impressed as he slumped back onto the sofa. He looked over at Ronan, who looked certain that he would not refuse, and could not help but sigh before looking up at Riddhe, who was standing upright. Riddhe was not looking down at a superior officer, which was considered a rude thing, as he continued to stare at a corner in a tense manner.

Riddhe was neither facing Bright nor his father. He looked like he was facing something as he desperately tried to stand upright. He looked so tense that he would collapse anytime, hiding the inner weakness within him—right, all the young men who piloted the “Gundams” over the previous generations had this expression. Bright swallowed this unnerving imagination together with the cold tea as he looked back at Ronan. The pillar clock rang, and the vague chime slowly stirred up the atmosphere inside the room.

Part 4[edit]

And just like how it arrived, the limousine with the liquid smoke function on its side glass showed the appearance of the visitor in it as it passed through the main door. Mineva felt the tension engulfing the mansion ease up as she let out a soft sigh as she left the window.

Please do not leave this room during this time. It had been an hour since Dwiyon notified here in an apologetic manner, and though they were not so cautious as to lock up the door from the outside, it seemed from the number of men that were sent to patrol around that this visitor must be of some distinct background. Was he a soldier, a policeman, some official from a public security organization, or a politician? Either way, the person that arrived would definitely be someone who could recognize her if they met, and something that will definitely involve her was gradually running. At this point, Mineva realized that when she was wasting them, the people in this mansion were already taking action, not listening to her views as they followed the logic the Federation had.

I want to leave this place. No, I have to leave this place. This hazy anxiety in Mineva started to take shape, and she grabbed onto the chest of her blouse. She had a basic idea of where the security in this kind of mansion and the people patrolling outside were located. Though it was not impossible for her to leave, what should she do immediately afterwards? Even if she wanted to rely on her allies on Earth, she did not know how to make contact with them. Another issue she had to consider too was whether it was appropriate for her to approach the Neo Zeon camp. She knew that she would just be bringing about chaos, and yet she could not do anything—however, was there any other place that would accept her at this time?

It's pointless to panic now. If I stay here, I'll be able to meet the Central figures of the Federation. The logic that had been preventing Mineva from taking action for the past 10 days rose in her mind, *but even so*, as she refuted in her mind, the knocking echoed through the air inside the room, and Mineva raised her head.

She tidied herself and said with a calm voice, "Please enter." She thought that Dwiyon would be the one telling her that she could head outside, but the one standing outside the door was an unexpected face. *Why is it that you're only showing up now?* She could not restrain the grudging thoughts in her mind as she immediately turned her face away from the visitor.

"Sorry, can I come in?"

Riddhe looked like he understood Mineva's expression as he asked with a stiff expression, forcing a smile. Mineva felt some apprehension in her heart as she saw this grey officer uniform she had not seen for a long time, "This is your house, you know", and answered as she looked towards the window. She could not restrain her anxiety as she opened the window, letting the wind outside blow into the room. Riddhe walked into the room with a bitter expression that was plainly shown, and turned his hand behind to close the door.

"I have to return to my position in the army. I'll leave the house tomorrow."

The lace curtains that were swaying with the wind blocked Riddhe's face that suddenly spoke up, and Mineva turned her silent stare to the other end.

"I'm assigned to the flagship of Londo Bell. More or less, I suppose I'll be sent to Africa. This was what I talked about with the commander…"

He spoke in a vague tone, and after that, he lowered his face as his fists that were dangling beside his legs were clenched tightly. "I'm really sorry" he then added, and Mineva sighed secretly in her heart as she saw the body standing in front of her being the embodiment of helplessness.

"I'm the one who said such big words about bringing you here, but I can't help in any way…but this is what I can do now."

Riddhe finished with this unexpectedly forced tone as lifted his head. "What's going on?" Mineva asked as she sensed that there was a surge in the atmosphere of the room.

"The Marcenas family and the Vist Foundation…are like two mirrors facing each other. I only learnt in the past few days that our family lived for so long through such a sorry manner…"

"Sorry…?"

"My family may use some despicable methods to prevent the "Laplace Box" from being revealed, even if it means using you as a hostage."

Riddhe spoke up and turned his face away. Mineva felt some vague presence surrounding the room starting to take an actual shape, pressing down on her shoulders, and she turned her face towards Riddhe, unable to say anything.

That night, when Riddhe hugged her and bellowed, "I actually brought you to such an unthinkable place, the real meaning of the words he said was—

“To prevent that from happening, we have to get the “Box” before the Foundation or Neo Zeon, or destroy the key of the “Box”.”

“The key…the “Unicorn”?”

Mineva barely managed to swallow the name Banagher down her mouth as she spoke. Riddhe looked like he did not want to consider this issue as he looked away, not answering her doubts.

“So…can you become a member of our family?”

In contrast, Riddhe said this without turning around to look. Mineva did not understand what he was saying to her as she frowned.

“How about you abandon Zeon and the Zabi family, and become a member of the Marcenas family? In that case, my dad will—”

To Riddhe, the last words were probably something he did not expect. His eyelids twitched, and he seemed to recover as he went quiet and lowered his eyes that were once facing Mineva.

“…Even if it’s just a formality, this meaningless war will end like that, and you’ll be free.”

“Do you feel…that can be considered freedom?”

Mineva too lowered her sights, her heart feeling the sand-like bitterness. These words sounded too tragic to both the speaker and the listener, and even though they were just a few connected words, she could understand that her body and mind were gradually being contaminated. Something very important was starting to fall off, unable to be retrieved again—this kind of disappointment spread in her heart. *Why must I stay here? Why did I come here?* This feeling of wanting to cry out loud caused her to clench her fists tightly. Riddhe remained silent, unwilling to stare at Mineva’s eyes.

Standing over there was the Federation officer who convinced her to break the deadlock and come to Earth. He was a stranger who was indoctrinated with something, who understood something, and who spent the past several days destroying himself. Mineva had nothing to say to this stranger, and she felt helpless, like she was abandoned in the vacuum. The reason for her to continue remaining here had vanished completely. *I have to leave this place before my body and mind are clouded—*

“…How to put it? Well, I…this man here seemed to have become a member of the Marcenas family.”

Riddhe muttered and turned away. “Sorry, forget what I just said.” As

he said that, he went towards the door, and Mineva watched him leave silently. Suddenly, she saw Riddhe's back stop in its tracks as he turned his face slightly to her.

"No matter what happens, I'll definitely protect you. I just hope you can believe in this."

Riddhe did not wait for Mineva to answer as he opened the door and walked out. She felt that these words sounded despicable, but she could find no words to connect with the Riddhe in space. She did not say anything as she watched him leave. No matter how he would explain it, that line sounded like a marriage proposal. Once the door closed, Mineva had this thought in her mind as she felt shame and disappointment lunge at her again.

It's not that Riddhe's a bad man. No matter who it is, I don't wish to deal with something major in life like this. Mineva understood that this was a childish form of anger from her as she leaned to the window to breathe the air outside. The forest that surrounded the residence was thick and dark, and the sense of dead-end despair was forced into her eyes.

Part 5[edit]

Despite growing up in completely different environments, he unexpectedly felt a sense of familiarity from Loni Garvey. He saw her from afar, standing in the shadow of a building that was like an abandoned place, arguing with a middle-aged man who looked like a bad guy, and felt that he could understand why he thought this way.

If they wanted to enter the capital of the Federation government, Dakar, they would have to be sufficiently prepared. Not only did they have to let their vehicles get inspected when they were interrogated, but they also needed an ID card that would act as a passport. Loni landed the VTOL carrier in the desert on the borders of Dakar, and ferried the group of people to the nearby city. At this point, she seemed to be carrying out negotiations for not only Zinnerman's fake ID card, but also Banagher's. He could not hear their conversation, but from the ugly expression on the man, who looked like someone doing underground business, Banagher could imagine him raising 3 fingers at the other man, angrily asking Loni what was going on. "She sure got patience." Zinnerman muttered on the back seat, but Banagher ignored him as he continued to peek at Loni, who was fighting alone, through the window of the car. After about 10 minutes of negotiations, the worker looked like he finally admitted defeat as he backed off, and Loni took two ID cards back to the car.

She undid the shawl that originally covered her face, and put the slightly short mantle onto her shoulder. Her long-sleeved shirt and tight pants covered her skin, and as she revealed her slightly wavy black hair, her clothing did not feel as thick and heavy as before when she was completely covered in a sheet of cloth. “Sorry to keep you waiting.” Loni said as she sat down on the driver seat in a very dexterous manner, and Banagher felt really flustered for some reason. As Loni reached for the front passenger seat to reverse, Banagher deliberately moved his body away from her as he looked outside the window. Unknowingly, several children were gathered on the cracked road, giving looks that could be described as ominous instead of curious.

Amongst the shadows that started to gather on both sides of the building, there was a young boy of around 12, 13 years old, seemingly the leader of the gang. He spat at the window, giving an extremely ominous looking stare. Banagher instinctively sensed that he would take action, and gave a meaningful stare at the driver seat, saying, “Miss Loni…” Loni silently turned the steering wheel and let the bumper hit the large trashbin on the roadside, pushed the gear lever forward and stepped on the gas.

The vehicle immediately accelerated as it rushed down the road. At the same time, the children started throwing stones and empty cans at the vehicle, and the blunt impact sounds rang in the vehicle. There were small figures appearing at the road in front, and there were children in running shirts and pants, throwing stones at the vehicle. It was unknown if anyone was throwing stuff from the windows of the buildings down the streets as there was a pot of plant that was thrown onto the windshield, causing him to cringe, “Don’t worry, it’s bulletproof glass.” But Loni said this without changing expressions.

She nonchalantly let the vehicle accelerate and turned the steering wheel to dodge the children, not causing any danger. Banagher saw the emerald eyes that radiated an adult like glow, and again realized that she resembled his mother a lot, just like he thought. He stared at the profile of the children that were becoming smaller on the window behind, and the yells of local accents and profanities gradually faded away. As the last piece of stone hit the windshield, the vehicle passed through the alley in the next moment as it arrived on the main street.

The trashbin that was sent flying away rolled around, letting out a sharp screech on the dusty tarmac. The children remained in the alley, unwilling to come out onto the main street as they knew that this was not their territory, and that there would be a terrible judgment awaiting them if they let the hoodlums ruling the main street lose face.

Banagher thought about how those children were most likely illegal immigrants who did not even get the chance to attend school, and as he recalled their ominous expressions, he seemed to sense the scent of his hometown.

In that old colony he stayed in, the town he grew up in was one of absolute desolation, and even the stench of the sewers would spread from the common ducts. If his mother did not have that determination not to be influenced by the rest and maintain her composure to her surroundings, Banagher too would probably become one of the children throwing stones outside. If he started to work with people who had the same mindset as him, and continued to fight for territory, his will to leave the desolated place would have decreased. If that were the case, he would not have the chance to see the poverty zone on Earth—

“You’re pretty used to it.”

Loni said as she activated the windshield wiper. On hearing that, Banagher heard his heart beat wildly.

“This isn’t the first time you’re here?’

“Yeah…I grew up in a colony, and it feels the same here.”

“Oh.” Loni turned away her surprised stare as she answered, looking in front as she did not pursue further. The side of her face showed an earnest sense, and Banagher could not breathe for some reason as he looked away to ask, “What I’m more concerned about is, is this good for you?”

“I’m referring to your dress up. I heard that women from Islam can’t show other people their skin.”

“There’re several sects amongst the Muslim believers in Islam; all sorts of people in fact, from the orthodox sect that follows the teachings word for word to the liberal sect that adapts according to their environment. The former has more or less died out completely, and speaking of which, if I’m an orthodox, you’ll have to be careful if you see my looks.”

“Why?”

“You’ll either be killed or forced to marry me. Only one of these two options.”

These direct words entered Banagher’s chest, and he knew that his embarrassed face was turning red. Sitting behind, Zinnerman sneered as he brought his face between the driver and front passenger seats.

“This young lady’s father is the chairman of Garvey Enterprises, and wants to enter the Central command of the political and commerce world through electricity generation. It’s impossible if he doesn’t act a little more civilized.”

“That kind of person’s also a Neo Zeon supporter?”

“Isn’t there a saying that the enemy of the enemy is my friend? Ever since the War, the Garvey family had been assisting Zeon. Those who are more aware of intelligence know this. the beliefs is a different thing as compared to business. The enterprises that bought electricity from us cheaply won’t care about where the amount they paid will go to. As long as politics are supported by those enterprises, the Federation government won’t do anything to us “Descendants of Dubai”.”

“The “Descendant of Dubai”?”

This name proves that the grudges mankind has will not disappear easily… I see it.”

There were tall buildings gathered in the far distance as they headed down the road lined with buildings that had dirty roofs on both side. Banagher forgot Loni’s slightly hazy look as he brought his face to the window to look afar.

The skyscrapers looked exceptionally dazzling when basked under the sunlight, and the buildings that were engulfed by the sand surrounding them felt very different from the surrounding dusty buildings. The silver skyscrapers did not look like they fitted in with the blue sky in the background, and it looked like a palace of glass that was beyond this world. He could see 3, 4 of them…and if he went closer to look, he might see even more. *They’re not just 100m tall, right? Anyway, this is something that can only be seen on Earth.* Banagher showed a stunned expression as he stared at the skyscrapers amidst the clouds in the distance. There would not be any of such majestic skyscrapers in a colony, which was restricted by the range for the centrifuge effect.

As Banagher stuck his face on the window, Zinnerman too showed a sharp glance at the group of skyscrapers. Loni however looked in front as she said,

“That’s Dakar, capital of the Federation government.”

Part 6[edit]

The city of Dakar was located on the Westernmost side of Africa, just off the peninsula of Cape Verde in the Atlantic Ocean. This had been an important trading cove in the Atlantic region ever since the old age,

and had prospered as an important place of commerce for the West and Africa. Also, the course of the toughest automobile racing event in the world, the Dakar Rally was located here, making this place more famous.

On the other hand, Dakar had been a slave trading region during the past middle region, and it was said that this place sent more black slaves to the West than any other port. However, this seemed to be a rumor that was made after Dakar became the capital of the Federation government. Ironically, after hundreds of years, the trading port that shipped out black slaves this time became the capital of the Federation government that forcefully controlled the population by sending people to space—not withstanding whether that could be read as a malice of history, the fact remained that those unhappy with the government would raise this point to cause trouble. The vehicle ferrying Banagher and company entered the city from the coastal road on the south side and headed off to the plateau area in the middle of the city. The hook-shaped south peninsula of Cape Verde could be seen, and it looked like an independent cap from the plateau. The landscape that surrounded the sea was covered with tall buildings, and the bustling scene was so astounding that even Manhattan before the war could not compare to it.

Actually, it was after the war that the Capital was set up here. After losing their capital during the One Year War, the Federation government decided to move to Dakar as part of the revival plan. They used the official residence in the self-government zone of Senegal and the administrative facilities, and spent several years moving the offices of the capital to this place. However, this action showed that they had underestimated the environmental impact caused by the colony thrown down on Earth. The desertification that came from the western side of Sahara was already starting to devour the Eastern side of the city, and it was said that in a 100 years afterwards, Dakar may end up in a desert. After that War, the flames of war swirled in this place again, during both the Gryps Conflict and the Neo Zeon War, and the government had no time to steady itself as it started plans to relocate the capital again. However, the plan to move the capital to Lhasa in Tibet was really an illusion that appeared for a fleeting moment. During the Second Neo Zeon War that was also known as “Char’s Counterattack”, the target of the colony drop was Lhasa.

As the Central parliament hall was in its final phase of movement, the mining quarry colony “5th Luna” that was moved from its orbit landed on Lhasa, destroying them both. The senators from the Central council managed to detect Neo Zeon army’s intentions, and had already

escaped from Lhasa before the unknowing civilians could. To the Federation government, though the anti-Federation sentiments would rise as a result, it was really fortunate of them to be able to save their human talents in Central. As the plan to move to Lhasa was still in place, they decided to move the capital back to Dakar immediately, and the vast capital sum that was originally planned to be moved to Lhasa was moved back to Dakar completely. As a result, this new Manhattan of the Universal Century had a sudden explosive-like rush of constructions, tall buildings that were built on the plateau area, and became a pavilion on sand…that was what Loni explained to Banagher.

Dakar had a landscape that was surrounded by the sea and the desert, and the skyscrapers definitely contained more than just halls and all sorts of enterprises. There were also high class hotels there and shops of all sorts of retail down the streets. Of course, it was also necessary to have residential areas for those in the service sector, schools and hospitals as well, and these facilities were all moved to Pointe des Almadies. The central functions of politics and economy were gathered at the plateau, but even so, the scene in front of him just looked too packed. Banagher looked up at the skyscrapers, and had the same feeling as when he went to visit an outer planet. Half of the skyscrapers were still in construction, and the large cranes stood tall in the sky, looking to go even higher. *The desert was spreading to the city, but there was still so much land, so was there a need to actually cluster everything in this area? The Earth is so vast, yet people have to gather these tall buildings together—*

“They’re like the pillars supporting the sun…”

As far as Banagher could remember, he had never seen such tall constructs other than the pillar supporting the artificial sun in the colony. He could not help but mutter, and both Loni and Zinnerman gave meaningful smiles, which caused him to realize that he sounded poetic. He did not intend to deliberately explain this, “This is really weird, you know?” and said this as he pouted.

“They built the buildings so high because they want to get closer to space, right? But those people aren’t willing to leave Earth.”

“They never intended to look up at space. They just wanted to look down at Earth. Earthnoids are like that.”

Zinnerman said. *In that case, won’t those who enter space be able to look down at Earth completely?* Banagher instinctively thought of this, but at the same time, he understood that his reasoning was completely wrong in the first place, so he turned around to look at the main street

called Pompidou Street. The luxurious boutiques, jeweler shops, and slightly stylish looking open-aired cafes looked completely different from the desolate slums from before that were about to be devoured by the desert, and it was to such an extent that one would wonder whether they could find even the slightest speck of sand here. The people heading up and down the streets were dressed brightly, and even if he was mistaken, he definitely saw children dressed in running shirts. The sea surrounding the city could making the fish market a tourist attraction, and it would not be strange to see those involved in the fishing business on the streets, but Banagher just could not see those kinds of people. *Is there a checkpoint to inspect on the dress code when people walk in and out of the streets?*

The moment he thought about that, Banagher felt that the city lacked a sense of life, and felt a chilling sense from this scene that was filled completely with an artificial presence, and he expressed his thoughts to Loni. Loni however chuckled, “Only Spacenoids can express such thoughts, huh?” and said this.

“There’s no real separate regulation for this, but that they naturally avoid coming out. This is a common theme for the cities under management. Each block is arranged neatly like a chessboard, and the way people live will have to change according to their whims. It should be more detailed in a colony, right? In that place where everything’s artificial, people will wish to live a messy life—”

“And those living in the harsh natural conditions will wish to live in the orderly cities under management, right…so they’re basically hoping for something they don’t have?”

“That’s right. The middle of these two extremes is probably the most suitable environment for humanity, but humanity doesn’t know how to restrain themselves and stop midway.”

The vehicle drove past the streets, and the skyscrapers gradually vanished behind. The wide line of sight showed a green stretch full of trees, the only exception being a wide plaza that was empty. There was an oval-shaped park in the middle of the plaza, and there were police cars deployed around the park. Banagher managed to make out the words ‘Prime Minister Office’ from the road sign, and suddenly felt a little thirsty. What then appeared in front of him was a group of office buildings that were not too tall, simple and steady looking with a relief at the tip of the triangle, making the place look like a temple-like construct. There were guards standing in front of a white building that was most likely the prime minister office, and the building that stood in front, lined around the ring-shaped road and took approximately 200m

worth of land was—

“That’s the parliament hall…”

“That’s right. That’s the headquarters of the Federation government, the place where all the representatives from every country on Earth is gathered for Central Meetings.”

Loni’s malt-colored skin showed a slight sense of tension as she continued, “It’s also, the new coordinates given by the Laplace Program…”

Zinnerman looked like he had difficulty breathing as he silently looked up. The group did not head off directly to the hotel where Mahdi Garvey was waiting, but took a detour on the roads in the city to check on the situation around the parliament house. Banagher’s interest in sightseeing faded away. He felt his stomach become heavier due to tension, and looked up at the building that could be considered the symbol of the Federation government. There was a white rectangular building that was approximately 30 levels tall amidst the 6 level buildings lined down the stretch. It did not try to cover or boast the tremendous authority it boasted as it showed its face that lacked empathy towards the sun of Africa.

Part 7[edit]

On a normal working day, it would not be difficult to enter the parliament hall. Even without a prior appointment, one could visit as long as they asked for permission at the registration window of the Lower House. They would have to follow the guidance of the security personnel in the buildings, but the courtyard of the parliament hall was in fact an open place, and one could take as many photos as they wanted. They would also need to proceed through two checkpoints, one for luggage checking and one for metal detection, but one could say that entering that place was as easy as entering a park or a plaza.

In fact, there were surveillance cameras set up all over the place to watch the visitors, and if there were anyone who would cause the slightest suspicion, there would be security personnel rushing in to surround them with sub-machine guns. On this day, it seemed that there was a primary school attending this place for a social studies lesson, and there was a scene of students of around 7, 8 years old facing the front courtyard, led by a female security guard as they moved along. However, the armed guards who were standing around caused the atmosphere to feel rather weird. *Had it always been like this? Or did the recent terrorist attacks caused them to strengthen their security?* Banagher could not tell which was the correct, as he looked

up at the central corridor that was 3 levels tall. He climbed up the stairs, and saw that there was a set of bronze doors on both sides of the First Prime Minister bronze statue. Each door weighed 5 tones, and it was said that these two doors would only be opened during a Senate election or when a newly elected senator entered for the first time. Normally, they would enter from the two corridors on both the left and right side of the Upper and Lower House. The security was tight as there were poles set up on the corridors with surveillance cameras on top of them, foldable barricades and guards on standby. The security personnel that were equipped with bulletproof vests and sub-machine guns looked as serious as Daguza and the other ECOAS members.

The surveillance cameras would turn randomly, quietly noting that it was not a mere decoration. *Since I'm caught in such an uproar, maybe my appearance is recorded amongst those that needs to be watched.* Banagher tried his best not to look at the cameras as he would mix around with the children or other visitors deliberately. At this moment, Zinnerman tapped him on the shoulder lightly and reminded,

"You'll look even more suspicious like that. Walk properly."

After whispering this, he immediately started to turn his head around to look while pretending to be like a country bumpkin. *Since Zinnerman's face was not exposed, I guess I should be fine.* Banagher convinced himself with this illogical reasoning as tried his best to look natural. But at this moment, he started to be concerned with the sounds of the jet engines that would appear and disappear from time to time, and looked up at the blue sky lit by the afternoon sun quite a few times.

He could see two flying machines passing by above the central corridor, about 10 levels above the central building from where he was standing. They rose to about 1km in height, and these wingless machines that glided through the atmosphere with their round lifting boards, looked like alien hovercrafts that people imagined a long time ago. "Those aren't fighter jets, they're transformable mobile suits." Zinnerman muttered softly, and Banagher felt a little frightened within as he chased after where the machines went. Those machines seemed to hover above parliament hall regularly, and they could not be seen after they went behind the silhouette of the building.

If those were transformable mobile suits, the reason why there were so many empty lands around the parliamentary hall would be self-explanatory. This showed that the security management did plan for them to land in front of the parliament hall and establish a defense line before anything happened. Of course, the forces deployed on the

ground would immediately take action and respond according to the enemy's attacks. Banagher did see a patrolling GM mobile suit on a hovercraft when he went down the road along the coastline. Most likely, there might be tank-shaped mobile suits hidden underneath.

"If we try to barge in here directly, we'll be peppered with holes here. It is possible if we attack from above, but…"

"The "breaking horn" mobile suit can't determine the situation in front of it if it can't stand here."

It seemed that Loni had known about the data. "That's right." Zinnerman sighed and admitted.

"Petty tricks can't fool that "Gundam". Maybe we have to cover it with some hood and drag it along with a trailer…?"

Banagher looked at the armored cars laid around the parliament hall, and even he could understand that this plan was not practical. The coordinates indicated by the Laplace Program was right at the point he was standing—the courtyard of the parliament hall's middle corridor. "It seems that my father has his own thoughts regarding this." Banagher heard Loni's words from behind, walked away from the duo, and looked up at the sky.

It's hot. Even though it's not as maddeningly hot as the desert, the hot air mixed with the sea breeze is dampening the skin, and it feels like I'm in a steamer, waiting to be cooked. I can't think of anything if I stand here. No, just standing here alone shows that my mind is not working properly. To think that I would be standing together with soldiers of Neo Zeon, looking up at the Federation's parliamentary hall, planning an intrusion that's no different from a terrorist attack…

But that was not all he was thinking. He, who wanted to understand the situation, who wanted to understand how important he was to this situation, truly existed, and if there was a need to take action, he would probably be willing to do it. The mentality Banagher would not have a few moment ago was sprouting inside him. *That's because I want to know the answer,* Banagher affirmed in his heart. He wanted to know what was hidden inside the "Laplace Box", and he wanted to know Cardeas' intent for opening it. Would it be just like what Alberto said, that he planned everything to create chaos of war? Or was there some other motive? As long as he could not get a clear answer to this doubt, Banagher would not know how to proceed.

That was why he was willing to help search for the "Box". But if a battle was started because of it—It seemed that it was free time for the

children, and their excited cries rang in his eyes as he suddenly felt dazed. He was surrounded by the hot air, gravity and the children running around. He put his hand on his dazed head, and as he arrived in front of the stairs of the central corridor, his eyes were caught by the stone tablet in front if it.

Below the feet of the first Prime Minister's statue that overlooked the courtyard, there was a hexagonal flat surface that reflected the sunlight, a large object that was 1m in length on every side. There were small words carved on this surface, and on a step below it, there was an explanatory level. Banagher stood at the bottom of the steps, staring at the explanatory words, "That's the Universal Century Charter" only to look back in shock after hearing this voice. Loni approached Banagher's back and looked up at the stone tablet.

"This charter that was announced together with the Change of Eras speech is the basis of the Federation government. To you Spacenoids, it's a curse that decided your fate for the latter 100 years."

"Curse?"

“Look at the 9th line there.” Loni pointed at the multiple lines on the stone tablet and continued “All space cities, as self-maintaining bodies of the Federation, are to fulfill their own functions, and their basic authority is to be given to the Central government…the other articles are only stated briefly. Don’t you find this one especially detailed? The space administrative plan the Federation set is all based around it. It’s not too much of a stretch to say that all the battles that started since the One Year War was based on this.”

On a closer look, there were numerous names on the clause, and all the representatives of each country, with the signature of Ricardo Marcenas, the First Prime Minister, being on top. A remote laser would sign the signatures on the stone tablet together with the handwriting on the writing pad, and it was signed on the night the change of eras would happen, in the prime minister’s residence of “Laplace”. Looking at the explanatory pad, this charter was established in the residence, and was planned to be released to the entire world during the change of eras. Banagher recalled the things he learned in primary school and glanced at Loni’s face.

“In the early ages, when the colony was completed, when it was proven that humans could live in space, everything was perfect. That’s because Spacenoids are seen as pioneers that created a new world, and never thought about what would happen afterwards. But after people were forced to move, when each Side was large enough to form a country, they finally realized that something was amiss. The Spacenoids did not have any rights to elect the chief of the Sides, let alone the Senate Council. No matter where they went, the sides were not deemed as countries, just self-governing bodies…everything was planned right from the beginning.”

The emerald eyes that were like Audrey’s gradually had a dull look on them. Banagher felt the intimate feeling disappear off her face, and could not help but look away from her.

“The Federation abandoned the extended population in space to allow Earth and humanity to live on. They not only killed humanity, but also our God. Because they said ‘say goodbye to the century of Gods’.”

“But the Federation never banned religion itself, right? There’re all sorts of cultures all over the world that’s maintained, and the First Prime Minister never denied the existence of Gods…”

I believe that a healthy representation of the human spirit would be to ascend to a higher plane, to give laws to ourselves, as we set higher bars for ourselves.—the words he heard from the ghost in the debris of “Laplace” overlapped with the bronze statue in front of him as he

argued. “That’s true. Listening to the speech alone, I do believe that Prime Minister Ricardo was a person with liberal thinking.” Loni answered, but her expression showed no sign of relaxing.

“That’s why he was assassinated, probably by the people who belonged to the Federation government as well. This stone tablet is a copy, the original was blown up together with “Laplace”.”

Banagher recalled the tragic and silent devastated scene he saw inside the debris of “Laplace”, felt a chill in his stomach, and kept quiet without saying anything.

“Mosques and Churches do remain. If you go to the Southern islands, you’ll only see villages of thatched cottages, and there’re a lot of people who followed their old customs. But that’s just a remnant left behind to preserve the old flair, and it’s no different from an attraction in a theme park. Those who think that they could avoid the suffering of the migrants just by putting on exotic clothes can’t even brag about their tribe’s culture and pride. Just like the Spacenoids now.”

“What does that mean.”

“The souls of the people on Earth are bounded by gravity, and all of humanity should have moved to space…that was what Char Aznable said when he occupied this parliament hall 9 years ago. Do you have any activists around you who believe in these words even at this point and work hard for it?”

“Just some down and out activists…”

But even amongst the children, those guys just look defeated. Loni looked towards the Banagher who mumbled vaguely, “There’re still cries for self-governance ever after the War, but after two Neo Zeon Wars, those cries should have faded completely, right?”, and added this vicious line.

“Everyone lost their drive, and felt numbed by the control of the Federation. That goes for the cities on Earth as well, but I feel that those living inside the colonies would become lazy. It’s like they’re broiling humans.”

These merciless words caused Banagher to sense an agitation of a Zeon follower. “Sorry, I didn’t have any intent on blaming you.” Loni added this line as she spoke to Banagher, who unknowingly frowned, and looked up at the stone tablet.

“The fact remains that without a powerful organization like the Federation, humanity would have been vanished from Earth a long

time ago. However, it had been almost a 100 years since humanity accepted space as their living place. Spacenoids can't stop caring and accept the Federation's rule; those that needs to be changed must be changed."

"Even if…people shed blood for it?"

Banagher did not get any response to his question. He stood beside Loni who gasped slightly, and turned his stare that had nowhere to go back to the stone tablet on the steps.

In order to pass the boundaries of race, religion and country borders, this artificial god called the Federation gift its 10 commandments of the Universal Century to humanity—as a price, some felt like the Gods they believed in was killed, just like Loni; while some like Zinnerman turned to a God of a new era that was born amidst the population abandonment called Zeon. God, hopes, possibilities, anyone could call it however they want. Marida said before that without light, humanity would never live on. Did the Federation rob the light of many when they went through the process of creating a world government? Did they build this stone tablet out of guilt? This stone tablet sealed off the possibility of change humanity planned, restraining them in the name of a shackle. This stone tablet that could barely be lifted by a mobile suit actually created a cover over the world 12 billion people lived in. The owners of the voices showed the distant future, but they could only leave behind a stone tablet that regulated the world…

Gyah! There was a cry from Banagher's feet, ending his time of deep thought. There was a girl who tripped on the way up the stairs, and though she did try to support herself with her hand, she landed hide on the steps. Her petite body froze, and she started bawling all over her face. As Banagher started to back away due to the crying, "Oh my, it hurts, doesn't it?" Loni said as she immediately reached out to help the girl.

"Show me your knee…un, this should be fine. This big sister will clean up the stained area, okay?" Loni said this as she took out a handkerchief to press down on the girl's wound and pat away the dirt on the girl's clothes. Banagher saw her point at the bronze statue to attract the attention of the girl, took out an antiseptic spray from her bag, and quickly sprayed the wound, and he was mesmerized as he watched how she did all these so easily. "That's okay, don't fall down now!" She said as she patted the girl on the back. The girl nodded and scampered off like a rabbit, and Loni, who watched her leave, suddenly showed an intimate presence on her face again. Banagher felt that the chilly atmosphere was rinsed off, and he felt that Loni was

dazzling, not because she was a female.

“You like children, don’t you?”

As he spoke, he suddenly thought that the girl should be about two years older than him. Loni however turned her unsuspecting look as she answered,

“Of course. Children are like blocks of possibilities. I want to have around 10 of them.”

“10…!”

“That’s considered a kind of resistance, I suppose. The greatest resistance a woman can do to prevent their race from being wiped out is to bear more children.”

Loni showed a slightly bold smile and left the scene. *So she too has such a wonderful thought.* Banagher felt a soft breeze enter his head as he saw the back of Loni walk off with a nice posture. Zinnerman, who had been standing beside unknowingly, pointed his bearded face that must have felt stuffy, “Try pursuing her!” and whispered to his ears.

“Those words aren’t something that can be said to anyone. I guess she must have an interest in you.”

Banagher knew that his face was blushing, and it was not because of the surrounding temperature. “Now’s not the time for this!” Banagher pouted as he said and chased after Loni, with Zinnerman snickering behind. It seemed like it was time for the children to return home as the teacher’s whistle rang from afar.

Part 8[edit]

Goreé Island used to be a slave trading port, but had become a tourist attraction at this point, and the Empire Hotel was built on the coast where Goreé Island could be seen from. This hotel was 150 levels tall, and had more than 4,000 rooms. The construction and lodging fees of this building were higher than those in the same industry in the city of Dakar which was bustling with business and resort hotels, and it was considered a hotel of the highest calibre in this city.

In one of the suites on the top floor, Mahdi Garvey was waiting in front of them. They were led in by Loni, and walked into the living room that had glass walls on two sides, and met Mahdi with the bright light shining from behind.

“It’s been a while, Zinnerman. Shall I call you captain now?”

The man, whose back was facing the blue sky outside the window, was seemingly dressed in a high-class suit as he opened his arms wide. The first impression Banagher had of him was that he was younger than expected. Banagher imagined that the chairman of a large corporation to be in his sixties, so he thought that the other man would look similar to Cardeas in some way. However, Mahdi, who stood in front of him, was only around 50 years old, and his tense and ferocious looking face could be passed off for a man in his forties. Banagher felt that it was because of the eyes. Mahdi who had a moustache near his mouth, showed fierce eyes, and his brown skin looked rather dazzling. A sharp expression alone would not be enough to describe Mahdi’s cold expression, and this caused the profound outline of his face to look younger than it actually was.

“Just call me captain. Fallen heroes can’t do anything even if they try to show off.”

Zinnerman answered. Both sides shook hands as Mahdi merely showed smiles on their faces. He looked past Banagher and stared at Loni, who was standing at the door “It’s been tough on you, Loni.” he spoke, and Banagher could sense that Loni was standing straight behind him.

“Abbas and Walid are waiting for you. Head back first, I’ll follow immediately.”

“Yes father.” The voice rang, and the sound of the door opening afterwards. Banagher exchanged glances with Loni as she left the room, and her smiling farewell face passed through his chest. “Are you the pilot of the “breaking horn”?” Mahdi asked, causing Banagher to

look back frantically.

“Yes…”

“In other words, you’re the living key of the “Box”. Welcome.”

He continued to remain unsmiling as he immediately looked away. “Sorry for choosing this western-styled room, but please relax.” Even if one were to ignore the sarcasm in these words, Banagher felt a sense of antipathy that Mahdi did not say his name, and did not look like he intended to introduce himself.

“There’s a lot of things we can talk about, but there’s not much time left, so let’s talk about the current situation.”

Mahdi poured the ice coffee provided by the room service into the glasses, and handed them to Zinnerman and Banagher who were seated on the sofa. At this point, Banagher noticed that there was something like a small knife hanging on his waist as he sat down on the sofa.

“The “Breaking horn”…it’s called the “Unicorn Gundam”, I suppose? Did you secure it?”

“Yeah. The “Garencieres” has completed its repairs. Once we’re refuelled, we’ll be able to fly anytime.”

“Good. We can begin our operation then.”

“What operation?”

“An attack on Dakar.”

Zinnerman’s hand that was grabbing onto the glass tensed up, and he glared viciously at Mahdi, who curled his lips up, “Don’t show such an expression. I don’t want to get people to do suicide terrorist attacks.” he smiled wryly, saying,

“It’s just temporary, but I have a plan to suppress Dakar. You just have to remain in the air and let the “Breaking horn” land. Once the target reaches the coordinates, the unit will show new information. That’s how the Program is designed, right?”

“That is right…but I’m not the only one who can decide. I hope that I can be given some time to discuss with the higher-ups first.”

“If you’re referring to Full Frontal, I’ve already obtained his agreement. He sent in reinforcements, including pilots. There are 3 brand new aqua units.”

These words were probably unexpected to Zinnerman, and Banagher could tell that he gasped and showed no signs of speaking up. “The “Sleeves” had never taken action on Earth all this time, but they’re really generous this time. It seems that the value of the “Box” has to be taken seriously. Mahdi continued as he showed a firm glance at Zinnerman.”

“That’s hard to tell. It’s dangerous to casually determine like that.”

“Everything will be clear as long as we get that.”

“If we attack Dakar from the front, the Federation will definitely not remain silent. It’ll become an all-out war.”

“That’s probably true.”

“They won’t keep a closed eye on you either. Is it really alright to crush the company like that? You want to waste the inheritance from Dubai for a “Box” with contents you have no idea of—”

“That inheritance is left for such a moment. I’ve waited long enough.”

Mahdi kept his smile as he stood up. Leaving behind the shocked Zinnerman, he walked towards the glass window wall and sighed as he looked like he could not restrain the feelings he had for a long time.

“I’m not the only one who had been waiting. My father and grandfather had been waiting too, and they died without being able to wait for this moment…”

There was a long wide arc intersecting the sea and the skies, reflecting the not-so-bulky frame of Madhi. Banagher felt that he could understand why Earth residents’ liked tall places.

“My ancestors knew that it was a matter of time before the oil resources would run out, and set a 100 year plan to build the economy city of Dubai. Once we broke free from the economy that relied on Dubai, Dubai would have given Arabia eternal wealth, but it was ruined by the White men’s (Franks) planning—all because they viewed it as a lair for separatists.”

The unfamiliar term ‘white men’ rang, and Mahdi showed a self-mocking smile as he glanced at Banagher, who went quiet like Zinnerman did and looked back to the other side.

“Those white men always use the same methods. First, they appease the royalty who loved to show off and made them agree to unfavorable investment conditions. Once the economy worsens, they would devour the other part. The white men had already planned this ever since the

moment they set up the Earth Federation…no, even earlier than that. They want to force Arabia and the Islam community into despair and force the entire race to bankruptcy."

He turned his sullen stare to the outside of the window as he put his hand on the small knife's hilt attached to his waist. Banagher did see that kind of arched-shaped blade before. *If I remember correctly, it's called a Shamshir—*.

"The terrorist explosion on "Laplace", the clearing of the separatists, the collapse of Dubai, everything was part of the Federation's scenario. The Garvey family which is associated with the Abu Dhabi royal family preserved the resources even the royalty did not know of, Dubai's inheritance, and continued running till now. We built a solar generator in the desert, and even mixed into the civilization of white men with the title of Muslim…"

Mahdi held onto the hilt of Shamshir tightly, and his expression got sharply as he turned to Banagher and Zinnerman. As he bore the weight of the term "Descendant of Dubai", he continued with a suppressed tone,

"This is to repay the white men that control the Federation. Now's the time to take action."

"But we have no idea whether the "Box" really exists in the first place!"

"It doesn't matter as long as it's a chance that can cause something. That's what an omen is about."

There was a kind of hardened feeling that would not accept other people's suggestions, and it became a form of wind pressure, shaking Banagher as he sat on the sofa. What shook him were not Mahdi's words, "I heard that the Vist Foundation protecting the "Box" never expected it to be leaked." Mahdi then continued as he looked to the window again.

"Rumors has it that the "Box" was released due to the sole discretion of the Foundation's leader, Cardeas Vist, but I can understand his intent. I've met Cardeas before, and that man is an enterprise leader born in the military. He feels that war and economy is all the same in the aspect of how people are killed. If this was his doing, we can tell that the "Box" really exists. Don't you feel that he would spend effort planning the coordinates?'

"What do you mean?"

"The debris of "Laplace", and then Dakar…both are places that

showed the guilt and filth of the Federation. The road to the “Box” passes through these places, and that means that Cardeas was summoning people. He wants to use our anger, let us rise up, and topple the Federation. Once the people who receive the “Box” start to rise up, the military industry will prosper. Anaheim Electronics and the Vist Foundation controlling it from behind the scenes will be the ones benefiting from it.

From his tone and expression, it was obvious that the man would not accept any other forms thoughts. Banagher recalled Alberto’s words as he listened, and while he thought that it was logical in some way, he looked to his inner heart that was unexpectedly calm, *Is that really the case?* and tried to ask himself.

During this journey he wanted through, he felt that there was an intent to help others to understand reality. Because of this, he could hear several rumors he had never heard of up till this point. He understood that debating on something through one-sided logic would be unreliable and dangerous, and he had to doubt adults like Mahdi who would speak in an arbitrary tone. These were things he understood in the process up till this point.

Zinnerman continued to stare at Mahdi with a silent expression. Banagher did not understand what kind of relationship they had during the war, but their relationship was probably not one of equal footing as they would make it seem. To Banagher, Zinnerman was simply keeping his ground while considering that the Zeon remnants were still being supported by the Garvey Enterprises, and Mahdi understood this well enough to continue talking on his own. He observed the man called Mahdi Garvey, and noticed that the hand on the Shamshir had a rugged-looking watch for military-use. For some reason, his temples started to pulsate again.

The Shamshir that represented the racial pride of the Middle East race was coupled with a watch that looked like it was given by the Federation. He knew that the man had to wear a suit when facing the political world, but these two things were different and just did not feel like they matched up, and Banagher could not trust someone who did not care about this. *Why is it that a man who has such racial pride under a suit must use such superficial western things to decorate himself? It’s weird. Something doesn’t feel right.*

“Is that so?”

Banagher’s mouth moved before he could notice it. He ignored Zinnerman, who turned around in shock, and stared right at Mahdi’s face.

“Everyone will have different thoughts after going to such places. I don’t think it’s just to trigger wars, you know?”

Don’t say it. Zinnerman nudged him in the flank with an elbow. Mahdi however merely showed a moment of impatience in his eyes as he twisted the lips under his beard, “Shocking, to think that the key would actually talk.” He said as he showed a smile, and Banagher decided to hate Mahdi for not viewing him as a human.

“Then, let’s hear what the key has to hear. What is Cardeas’ true intent when he handed the “Box” and wanted someone to go through so many detours.”

“To make humanity understand what happened in history, and know the reality that caused such developments. That’s what I feel.”

Banagher too felt unexpected that he could say such words so simply, and he could not help but touch his temples. It was not pulsating, and a thought came from Banagher’s mind, *this isn’t what dad planted into my mind.* “Oh?” Mahdi answered as he narrowed as he answered.

“If the “Unicorn” determines that the pilot matches it, it will open a path to the “Box”. Cardeas Vist said that before. The “Unicorn” doesn’t have an ability or disposition, but something much gentler. I think it can be called a heart…”

“Heart? Are you saying that the machine has a system can detect the heart?”

“I can’t really be certain. To put it, sometimes, it’ll amplify my emotions and reflect them on the system.”

Mahdi gave a doubting look, wondering if the boy was out of his mind, and turned his stare over to Zinnerman. “I’ve seen it a few times too. That’s not an ordinary Psycommu machine.” Zinnerman answered, and Banagher felt encouraged by these words as he gave Mahdi a stare again.

“I can’t imagine what kind of thing this “Laplace Box” is, but if that’s really something that can change the world, we have to act cautiously about it. I think the processes are testing the intention of those who want the “Box”. If we can’t understand the reality and the history that led us to this point, we naturally won’t be able to think about the future. The “Unicorn” interacts with the heart, and it’s definitely because it wants to check the thoughts of the pilot…”

“You might be making sense if it were a key that’s for kids. However, that’s not the case in reality. You became the key out of coincidence.”

Mahdi interrupted with a stern tone as he turned around. “You may be right, but adults don’t necessarily understand everything correctly, right?” Banagher argued back as he inadvertently got up from the sofa.

“Everyone, adults and children, will express themselves in ways that are beneficial or hope to see everything that is beneficial to themselves. But power alone isn’t enough. What the “Unicorn” wants to say is…”

“That’s enough, Banagher.”

Zinnerman’s voice had some intimidation within it as his voice echoed within everyone’s ears, and Banagher did not continue. *I spoke too much,* Banagher regretted as he sat back onto the sofa like a puppet with snapped strings. Mahdi let out a sigh and removed his hand from the Shamshir. The cold sound of the hilt and the scabbard hitting each other could be heard in this well air-conditioned room.

“Sorry for not teaching him probably.”

“You’ve recruited a local soldier after all. You’ve sure been busy there.”

Mahdi looked back at Zinnerman with a stiff smile, and turned to look at the glass window again. His back looked smaller than before, and Banagher could see an overlapping image of Alberto on that back. The backs of those who had no choice but to bear the destiny of the family, and though they were forced into a corner, they could only bluff their way through—

“I’m not asking for a return here, but Frontal gave another mission.”

After a short moment of silence that could calm the inner heart, Mahdi suddenly mentioned something else, “He wants me to look for Her Highness Mineva Zabi. Right now, all we know is that she landed on North America. We’re still looking into other information, but news is that the one that let her land on Earth is Ronan Marcneas. She’s mostly likely with him.”

Banagher and Zinnerman looked up with shocked expressions on their faces. *Did they manage to meet safely? Banagher immediately recalled the name Riddhe Marcenas, and Zinnerman, who stood beside him, mused, “Ronan Marcenas…the chairman of the Settlement Issues Council?”*

“That’s right. He’s also involved with the Federation space army’s reassembly plan. This Ronan is also planning to use this chance to capture the “Box”. He’s currently sheltering Her Highness so as to prepare for a clash against the Vist Foundation…I did hear of something suspicious during my investigations. It seemed that the subordinates of the Vist Foundation have made contact with the Newtype Research facility in Augusta.”

“The Newtype Research…?”

“It’s still unconfirmed, but it looks like they have a Cyber-Newtype as a prisoner. Do you have any idea who it can be?”

Zinnerman’s face showed an obvious change. Marida Cruz rode on the Foundation’s shuttle and went to Earth together with Alberto—“Those crazed scientists in the research facility got themselves a rare experimental specimen. It’s like a sheep being fed to the wolves.” Mahdi continued, and his expression obviously showed that he knew what sort of response Zinnerman would have.

“I am aware of my anxiousness here, but you just happened to be the one who landed on Earth together with the “Box” that can topple the Federation. Naturally, I feel that this is an omen.”

Mahdi gave Zinnerman enough time to understand and accept this as he quipped with a formal tone. Banagher felt that this voice was to be

expected, but Zinnerman did not lift his face that was looking down.

“The direction this situation is developing is prompting us to move. You haven’t forgotten the tragedy of Globe, right? At this moment, Her Highness and your subordinate may be going through the same thing.”

Zinnerman finally lifted his face as he glared at Mahdi, and then lowered his silent stare onto the floor. Right in front of them was a man who only cared about solving the problem at hand, and he would make use of other people’s weaknesses without hesitation for the sake of promoting his stand. As Banagher felt disgusted by this, Mahdi did not look over at him, “My preparations here are complete” he quietly added.

“All that’s left will depend on what you do next. Will you help us?”

Mahdi had his back facing the sky that was starting to lose its details, and his sharp, sly eyes were glittering. Zinnerman put clasped hands on his knees, and did not say anything as his unwavering face showed the deep bitterness within him. Banagher himself clenched his helpless fists.

Part 9[edit]

One could see the fishing port beside the medina area as he moves along the coast of the plateau to the north. The scenery of the fishing port itself had never changed, but to the Spacenoids who only knew about the artificial coasts in the colony, it was a mesmerizing scene that had an Earth-like flair. There was a saying that stated that both fish and water were both dependent on each other. The fishing port relied on the visitors that arrived everyday for a living, and naturally, there were cafes and restaurants linked here. The selling point of such shops was that they could cut up the fish that was just reeled in and send them to the kitchen while fresh. It was said that enterprises and government agencies would bring people to this place for reception.

The flight Loni let Banagher and Zinnerman ride on would only take off in the night. They had refused the invitation for a meal, and left the hotel Mahdi booked a long time ago. At this point, they were at the open-aired café at the medina area. The sun was gradually setting west, and the reddish sunset was approaching the horizon constantly. The sun that dyed the sea golden at evening showed a different kind of beauty from the scenery seen in the desert. Though Banagher was not used to the sound of the sea breeze at first, it felt soothing to him at this point, and the rustling of the trees felt delightful. He could not stand the fishy stench, but it was natural to smell the stench of death when consuming other lives for food. In the colonies, where there were

handling plants from farming to processing, fish were a source of protein that were killed off first.

He could see a mobile suit flying over on a hovercraft from beyond the fishing boat masts located on the port. The large machine, a Federation machine called the “GM III” that was built with a streamlined straight frame had an assisting booster equipped to its backpack, and looked like it was stationed to protect the capital. From Banagher’s position, the way it laid itself out on the hovercraft did make it look like it was windsurfing. *I’ll have to fight it if I attack Dakar, right?* Banagher could not sense any sense of realism as he muttered in his heart. He then looked over at Zinnerman, who was seated opposite him. Zinnerman had gulped down the first mug of beer that was served almost instantaneously, and the second mug was almost empty. His facial expression that lost all sharpness was looking at the other end of the horizon. His eyes showed no signs of being tipsy, but it seemed like he was a dampening shadow in this bustling café.

“…Well, I’m sorry for what happened just now?”

Banagher never talked to the other man right in the eyes after they walked out of the hotel. Mahdi hit the weak spot, and he was worried about whether he would be able to keep his calm as a captain. Unable to get rid of his doubts, he spoke up a few minutes later, and Zinnerman then turned his eyes sharply at him.

“I talked too much in front of Mr Mahdi because I got too ahead of myself…”

“No. What you felt was correct.”

Zinnerman again turned to look at the horizon, and he sounded unexpectedly calm. Banagher held his breath as he looked back.

“When we entered the atmosphere…the “Unicorn” approached the “Garencieres” on its own like a living person. You should have already lost consciousness by then. It did not move like a machine. I guess it responded to your heart.”

Heart. Zinnerman showed a slightly troubled expression as he mentioned this term, and continued,

“That’s a sub-consciousness deep within you that even you can’t reach…I guess. Even though you sealed your heart, that machine still detected it. It knew that you wanted to live, that you still have strength to live on. The “Unicorn” is driven by such a will. There has to be some form mechanical logic within it like how the Psycommu started controlling it on its own.”

Zinnerman gulped down the beer in large mouthfuls, and played with the empty mugs, “In fact, the guy inside is someone who can’t die no matter how many times you try to kill him.” and added on with a bitter smile. *The captain’s still the same as usual.* Banagher felt relieved as he asked, still feeling a little shocked inside, “So you brought me to the desert to confirm this?” Zinnerman however merely gives a thin smile, not saying anything at all.

“…Will you assist in Mr Mahdi’s operation?”

After a moment, Banagher raised the question he was most concerned about. The smile disappeared from Zinnerman’s mouth.

“Mr Mahdi said that he wants to suppress Dakar. That means he’ll attack this city, right?”

“Yeah…”

“Don’t do that. Since we know where Miss Marida is, why don’t we go save her? If it’s Audrey…Princess Mineva, she’ll—”

“We can’t just go after we say so. That’s how it is in the military.”

Zinnerman interrupted with an anxious tone as he put the beer mug back onto the table. Banagher saw that he looked as serious as a professional soldier, and could only keep quiet.

“…Hey, Banagher, do you want to come over to our side?”

Zinnerman stared at the empty mugs as he mumbled this time. At this moment, Banagher heard his heart beat loudly.

“You want me to join Neo Zeon?”

The response was silent. Banagher felt that his throat was suddenly stuck, and he felt unable to breathe as he lowered his face that could not answer. “You don’t want to?” Zinnerman asked silently.

“It can’t be helped, I guess. We’re the terrorists who wrecked the colony you lived in.”

“…That’s not it. I too killed Mr Gilboa and other pilots. I’m not going to assume things on one side’s values, but I’m going to try and understand it a little.”

Something inside my heart was changing when I talked with Mahdi—no, even earlier than before. Banagher said as he faced this kind of emotion, while Zinnerman showed him a deliberate sharp stare.

“Right now, I can’t just stay in the safety zone and critique. I’m part of

the situation, and I have to take responsibility. But this isn't something I can accomplish by joining one side…"

Banagher could not form his thoughts into words as he clenched his hands that were on his knees. Daguza and Captain Otto did talk about the term "responsibility" before, and this troublesome term would bind him up, making him unable to respond and even force him to become evil. However, if he could not bear its weight, he would not be able to do anything in this world. If he did not want to become a helpless bystander, he had to prepare himself to take the role of a protagonist and take up the responsibility that came with it. On this premise, even if it showed only a little effectiveness, he would find a possibility to improve the current situation and bear the weight of the world—that was definitely what Cardeas wanted to express. What he wanted to teach was that if one wanted to do something, he has to find out what that something was he could do, and then try to get as much ability to approach that target as possible.

"I'm still not too sure of what I should be doing…but someone once told me to think about how to use the "Box" for a good outcome. Maybe that's something I should—"

Zinnerman suddenly raised his hand and called the waitress beside him. "Another beer please. For him." He said with a nonchalant look on his face as he pointed at Banagher, wanting him to continue talking. "I'm still underaged, you know!?" Banagher then gave a shocked expression right back as his momentum was worn out.

"Just drink. Today's a special day."

"What's special…"

"You've become an adult. There's no punishment for celebrating a little anyway."

A warm smile Banagher had never seen before caused him to feel some warmth in his stomach. He felt embarrassed, and thought that he could not look back anymore as he turned his stare to the sea surface that was dyed sunset.

Audrey's definitely looking for something she can do to stop this meaningless war on the other end of the horizon. Anxiety and excitement raced in his heart as he suddenly thought, *What about Ensign Riddhe? I hope he can proceed smoothly there, but—*

Part 10[edit]

It had been an hour since he went from Cape Canaveral in North

America to the West Indies islands. As he flew in the skies above after travelling for 1,000km, Riddhe discovered the battleship that was to be the destination.

“Is that it…?”

He switched the all-view monitor expansion cursor to the target and let the CG correct the visuals. The smart-looking ship had a simple bridge on it, and it was definitely the “Ra Cailum”.

The flagship of Londo Bell departed from the Eastern side of Asia, and reached the skies above the Atlantic Ocean after moving over half the world. Riddhe stared at the profile that resembled a “ship” more than the “Nahel Argama”, and understood that his heart was not fretting as he took care to adjust the speed and height of the machine. The “Delta Plus” that transformed into Wave rider form moved its main wings slightly, drew a long arc of a jet stream in the air, and the machine’s silhouette that resembled a plane started to fall in height.

The “Ra Cailum” was located 500m above the ocean, and though he understood the concept behind it, he still felt intrigued by how this ship looked like it was floating above the sea. Since it could maintain a low speed of 300km per hour, one could see that the functions of the Minovsky Craft were working well. Riddhe estimated the relative velocity of his machine that was flying at subsonic speed as compared to the ship, checked that the estimated time of arrival had no change, and sighed slightly as he opened the visor of the helmet. He rubbed his eyes that were bleary due to a lack of sleep the past few days, and the sharp alarm-like sound rang inside the cockpit.

Riddhe then closed the visor and grabbed onto the control sticks again. The automatic sensors caught sight of 3 machines approaching from the “Ra Cailum” as the window expanded in a corner of the all-view monitor. The 3 machines that could be identified on the window were giving allied signals, and they were equipped with subflight systems (SFS). They were 1,200m above the water, and the relative speed was 0.8 Mach. The SFS used standard Base Jabbers, but the “Delta Plus” could not identify the mobile suits on them from its records.

“No matching data…is that the new “Jesta” that was mentioned before?”

Riddhe stared at the humanoid machines that were colored medium blue, and recalled the name of this new model when the “Ra Cailum” was undergoing testing. At this moment, the detail that was in a V formation suddenly scattered, causing him to hold his breath. The

expanded windows chased after the scattered machines as it formed three blocks and started searching through the all-view monitor. With the slightly dim evening sky as the backdrop, the oval-shaped Base Jabbers let out short jet streams, and the giant detail that was above entered Riddhe's eyes for a short moment. They were GM-type mobile suits, but their shoulders and legs were equipped with thick protruding armor, and each part had large thruster nozzles. One would naturally think of a smart refined figure when the advantage of a GM-type is mentioned, but these were as massive as American Football players.

The massive mobile suits were piloting the unmanned SFS as their transport carrier, approaching rapidly. The two mobile suits that flew first went in the opposite direction of the "Delta Plus", and Riddhe frowned at this. They were being too close if they wanted to pass by, and the actions those two mobile suits did shock him. As the trio pass by each other, the two "Jesta" actually stepped off the Base Jabbers and leaped into the air.

"What…!?"

The two mobile suits looked like they were trying to get in the way of the "Delta Plus" as they lit the thrusters on their backs and legs, crossing each other in the sky. It was impossible for a non-transformable mobile suit to be able to fly in the sky, except for the ship that had a large Minovsky Craft on it. They intertwined in the air for a moment, and immediately went straight down, covering the all-view monitor. Riddhe hurriedly lowered the height of the machine, but the smoke the two mobile suits created was mixed in with steam, covering his eyes, and the "Delta Plus" was swaying unsteadily in confusion. Once they finished their stunt-like zero distance intersection, the two machines landed on the other Base Jabbers and flew towards Riddhe who pushed the control sticks to the maximum.

It was common to have such aerial transit training where they would practice how to switch Base Jabbers, but normally, they would practice leaping from top to bottom, so the switch between two mobile suits side by side was definitely not normal. Riddhe stared at the two mobile suits that were moving far away, but the lock-on signal that rang next caused him to tremble. He saw the other "Jesta" get above him without him knowing, raising the beam rifle, and aimed at the "Delta Plus" from the Base Jabber.

"What are these guys thinking…!"

Riddhe immediately let the machine tilt sideways to escape from the opponent's shot path. At the same time, he saw the two machines behind him quickly spin around to surround him from both left and right

sides. In the midst of this tremendous G-force, he activated the open channel of the wireless communicator.

“To the approaching allied forces, this is Romeo 008 of the Nahel Argama Squadron, Ensign Riddhe Marcenas. I’m transferred to the “Ra Cailum” and headed to your ship now. Please make a way for me.”

There was no response. The two machines that tailed the “Delta Plus” from the rear left and right sides gradually pulled their distance. Since there was a mobile suit waiting for him in front, Riddhe could not accelerate to shake them off. “You guys should be hearing this, right? Hurry up and answer!” The two mobile suits on the sides looked like they were laughing at this agitated Riddhe as they leaped off the Base Jabbers again, crossing in the air to bring confusion to the machine. The front of the waverider sank down, and the alert indicating a loss in speed flickered on the display board.

Riddhe managed to adjust the machine, only for the remaining mobile suit to point its beam rifle at him from above. He understood that he was being toyed with as he clicked his tongue at this perfect

coordination, and felt blood rush to his head as he glared up at the “Jesta” that had the serial number U007 on the shoulder. “IF you want to fight…!” He uttered out these words and glared over at the two machines that were sticking to him closely. The left side was U008, and the right was U009; and after checking the serial numbers on the shoulders, he guessed that the mobile suit that was working alone was the leader suit, deliberately slowed down and let the two machines glide pass.

It seemed that both sides felt that Riddhe was scared as they adjusted their speeds cautiously, intending to switch over for the third time. The moment they jumped off the Base Jabbers, Riddhe pulled the control stick and let the “Delta Plus” transform into its mobile suit form. The silhouette of the waverider immediately broke down, reforming into a human-shaped unit as it let out a thin layer of steam. Riddhe lit the thrusters to negate the air resistance that was coming in from the front, and charged right at the “Jestas” that were about to cross in front of him.

He broke through and caught up to the U009 that was about to dodge, and as he saw the main camera on the GM-type visor. He then let out the throttle to its maximum, and planned to let the “Delta Plus” step on the back of the “Jesta”.

(You dare to use me as a stepping stone…!)

The angry growl of the pilot rang through the communication channel. Riddhe used this stepping momentum to touch on the Base Jabber the U009 planned to land on. The left arm of the “Delta Plus” grabbed onto the grip of the platform while its right arm drew out the beam rifle. The universal-use connector lit its matching signal, which indicated that the Base Jabber was controlled by the “Delta Plus”.

The U009 was used as a stepping stone and lost control of the Base Jabber as it felt down to the sea 1km below. The U008 connected to its Base Jabber as it immediately turned around to look for the leader’s U007 unit. He trailed the jet steams crossing in front of him and pointed his rifle at a cloud behind him. At the same time, the lock-on alarm rang. (OK, that’s all for now.) The voice from the wireless communicator rang inside his helmet.

(I’ve more or less understand your ability, Ensign. It looks like you didn’t get the special treatment for nothing.)

The U007 that pointed its gun at the “Delta Plus” beforehand raised it back. *What is this guy saying?* Riddhe was unable to understand the situation immediately as he kept his reticule pointed at the “Jesta” that

was above him. Another alarm could be heard from another direction, and he frantically raised his mobile suit. Riddhe saw the Base Jabber of the U008 rising up form below and pointed his gun over. At this moment, the voice could be heard from the U007's wireless communicator (Stop it, Daryl!)

(But Leader Nigel…! How can we let others look down on Londo Bell's Tri-Stars—)

(We're being looked down upon because this is the extent of our abilities. Go get Watt's "Jesta" back on board. We still have to go through our training tomorrow even if it's soaked in seawater.)

(Roger that!) The U008 pilot yelled back as its Base Jabber went down to the sea. *So they're the legendary Londo Bell Tri-Stars?* At this moment, Riddhe did not feel really emotional as he stared at the "Jesta" the man called leader Nigel was piloting. The U007 was half-squatting on its Base Jabber, and it raised its left arm to a horizontal level, surprising him.

The mechanical arm reached over to him, seemingly welcoming him. A black spot could be seen floating in the sky, and it was the silhouette of the "Ra Cailum". This seemed to indicate that the welcoming party was over. Riddhe confirmed the personal mark of three stars shot through with an arrow, and sighed at the thick-skinned action. He let the "Delta Plus" get off the Base Jabber, turned away from the SFS that started to wheel away on its own, transformed into the waverider and lit its thrusters.

The Daryl and Nigel units that took back the U009 that fell into the sea followed up. Riddhe felt stares of antagonistic intent and curiosity as he opened the communication channel with the "Ra Cailum". The premier large battleship was merely a black spot in the sunset backdrop, and he felt a sense of unease when he saw the scene of this place that would become his mothership.

Part 11[edit]

The large and white ship frame of the "Ra Cailum" had a catapult deck on both port and starboard sides that were unified with the ship. It was about as old as the time of establishment since Londo Bell was formed, and could be considered a newly built model. The long and narrow ship was inferior to the "Nahel Argama" in terms of quality, but it was almost 500m in length, and could hold 12 mobile suits.

This "Ra Cailum" once led the Londo Bell fleet opened a defense line during the Second Neo Zeon War that happened 3 years old, and

managed to prevent the space asteroid base “Axis” from falling onto Earth, indicating its activeness to the world. It was said that the fleet that was half-decimated took a large sum for repairs, and the reason why this ship continued to be the flagship of Londo Bell was mostly due to political considerations. The Neo Zeon War could be seen as one where both sides suffered heavy casualties before everything ended, and thus, the Federation government had to brag their army’s victory and hailed the “Ra Cailum” that saved Earth as a symbol of victory.

The fact that Captain Bright Noa was the ship captain during this war should probably be a big reason for such political considerations. The man himself may not have such ambitions, but this young commander of “White Base” was hailed as a hero of the One Year War, and after more than a decade, this hero was hailed as a symbol of the war’s victory. Ever since he took over as Fleet Commander, he was given an exception of a personnel order to continue as a ship captain from the Senate Council deliberately. That was because he wanted to remain distant from the Central government, and because they felt the danger from the title of “Newtype Squadron Commander”. Perhaps these two thoughts created a coincidence that created this outcome.

If that were the case, there would not be a more troublesome ‘guest’ than Riddhe himself on this ship. He was taken in by the “Ra Cailum”, and before he could even take off his pilot suit, he was summoned to Captain’s room. Without changing his expression, he gave a bitter laugh at how he was thinking about he, who hated politics all this time, would be considering the other man’s political position…

“Today’s training didn’t include “Jesta” anti-water properties, right? Lieutenant Nigel.”

Bright did not look over at Riddhe who said this as he stared at Lieutenant Nigel Garrett, who too was summoned to the Captain’s room for questioning. “Yes, I’m really sorry.” The Tri-Stars leader seemed to understand that the actions of an ace pilot were not restrained by rank. His still posture was wavering somewhat, and his glittering eyes under the slightly long bangs were very calm, not hiding the thought that it was part of his job to listen to a superior officer’s lecture. For a 27 year old soldier, Nigel’s expression was extremely reserved, and he not only had an aura of coolness and elegance for a man, but also a sense of arrogance, seemingly the most trusted pilot. But basically, he had a sense of bottomless presence to him.

Perhaps Bright was already used to seeing such things as he did not look like he minded while sitting in front of the table. Like the “Nahel

Argama", the Captain's office was squared, 5m a side, and besides Riddhe and the Tri-Star leader, there was First Officer Meran, who had been giving a pessimistic look right from the beginning. Riddhe recalled Squad Leader Norm saying that the mothership and a pilot had to have a married-like camaraderie. If the pilot were to misbehave, the defense line of the mothership would be affected; and if the crew members of the mothership hated the pilot, the pilot would have nowhere to call home.

"They met Ensign Riddhe's "Delta Plus" during flight training, and with Lieutenant Nigel's suggestion, the Ensign agreed to take part in the training, and during the mid-air transit, Sub-Lieutenant Watts lost control and caused the Uniform Nine to fall into the sea…is the truth different from what I said, Ensign Riddhe?"

Nevertheless, First Officer Meran continued to frown with his thick eyebrows as he said with a gruff voice befitting of his hulking figure. Riddhe intended to speak up, but Sub-Lieutenant Watts Stepney went forward to say, "I didn't make a mistake." causing Riddhe to remain quiet. The round-faced Watts did not know that he was in a completely opposite position from Nigel. It seemed that Watts was the most impulsive amongst the Tri-Stars, and he was the one who looked for trouble with Riddhe first when he got on the ship. Things managed to end quietly before this because Nigel yelled at him, but Riddhe probably would expect another surge of emotions from him.

"I operated it just as per normal. It's because—"

"Sub-Lieutenant Watts."

Sub-lieutenant Daryl McGuinness, who was standing beside Watt, interrupted him as he spoke up, saying, "First Officer Meran is asking Ensign Riddhe here."

As the infuriated Watts calmed down, Daryl did not look at anyone else in the eyes as he merely looked before. His relatively thick Latin blood and curly hair matched each other, giving him a carefree presence, but this man was not to be underestimated. Daryl merely felt that this was not something they could deal with, and unlike the simple-minded Watts, he had another kind of danger to him. Riddhe held back from sighing and turned to Meran, answering, "What you said is the truth." No matter what, Riddhe's thoughts were no different from the other two members of the Tri-Stars. He too wanted to get away from this place as fast as possible.

Of course, the one who asked most probably knew that this was not the truth. He stared at the emotionless Nigel, and then turned to the

unkempt faces of Daryl and Watts, “It’s great to be so passionate about training.” and sighed as he said.

“However, the “Jesta” is a crucial machine in the Federation space military reassignment plan. You’ll only add to the troubles if you go out of control and ruin the results of the tests, and besides, we’ll probably be called in to take part in a real battle in the future. Do you understand? This is an opportunity you’ve been waiting for so long since you couldn’t make it to the Neo Zeon War, right? What do you intend to do if the machines can’t move in the middle of a crisis?”

It seemed that it would truly be troublesome, as Nigel and company showed a slightly frozen expression. It was true that 2, 3 years ago that they broke a new training record through their own unique attacks, and became famous as the Tri-Stars of Londo Bell. If they could not prove that they could use their skills in actual training, their fame at this point would only be a fleeting image—perhaps the trio were anxious over this.

“That’s enough, Meran. I don’t intend to pursue things further, but you people are to try and appease the engineers of Anaheim as much as possible.”

Bright said that as he got up from his chair. . “Yes!” Nigel and company stamped their feet together and answered.

“Same thing to the deck crew. You’re to clean up the seawater on the deck.”

“Yes…” The trio showed a cloudy expression on their faces. “Is there a problem?” Bright then asked to confirm as he narrowed his eyes at the Tri-Stars.

“Clear up what you began. That’s all. You can go.”

“Yes!” The trio’s response echoed through the Captain’s room, and Riddhe sensed that they turned behind together from beside. Daryl pulled Watts, who was giving a heinous stare, by the shoulder, and retreated from the room. Finally, Nigel passed through the door. “Lieutenant Nigel.” The door was half-closed the moment Bright spoke up.

“What’s your appraisal of Ensign Riddhe?”

“He passed.”

Nigel simply answered and did not look at Riddhe in the eyes as he closed the door. Not knowing what expression to give, Riddhe could only look back at Bright. “Please excuse me then.” Bright nodded at

Meran who said this as he looked back at the monitor panel. He waited for Meran to leave the room, and let out a soft sigh.

“You sure had a violent welcoming party, Ensign Riddhe.”

“Yeah…”

“Our course will change course to Africa. The report states at the Zeon remnants hiding in the Sahara desert are starting to move aggressively. If it has something to do with the disguised ship, we may end up fighting immediately after we make contact.”

Bright hid the smile he showed for a moment as he called out the satellite visual of the Western Sahara on the monitor panel. He continued to use his eyes to stare at the movements the Zeon remnants made for the past few days as he continued.

“Securing the “Laplace Box” is our utmost priority, but we probably won’t have that kind of freedom. Better tense up and work well if you want to be a pilot of this ship.”

Bright merely said this. Riddhe original thought that the other man would go more in-depth with the conversation as he gave a surprised expression, “Yes.” He stared at the back that was silently prompting him to leave, made his decision and spoke up, “Can I say something here?”

“What is it?”

“No matter my origin, I’m a pilot of the Federation army. I hope I won’t have any special treatment.”

The reason why the Tri-Stars would pull such petty tricks on him was because news of him being given special treatment was spread through the ship. He was already mentally prepared about being viewed as an irritant, but he could not stand being treated as a troublesome VIP and being unable to do anything. He stared at the back that had no intent of looking back at him and continued to emphasize with a restrained tone.

“I’ve been through battle before. Please don’t remove me from dangerous missions just because I have to keep watch—”

“DON’T BE NAÏVE!”

Bright turned around to let out a roar that pierced through the pilot suit, causing goosebumps on Riddhe’s skin. Bright turned back to say as he stared at the eyes on Riddhe’s stiff body, “This thought itself shows that you view yourself as a privileged person. If you want to be a

normal pilot, go help clean the deck." He pulled his black hair that was a little unkempt on the side and turned to the numerous obituary photos hanging on the war.

"I've seen a lot of pilots who believed that they won't die in battle. However, people will die when it's time to die."

There were photos of pilots who served this ship in the past, but were unable to return as they vanished on the battlefield—Riddhe followed the stare that was fixed on the photo of Lieutenant Commander Amuro Ray, and felt that his mouth was blocked as he looked back at Bright. Bright's face showed a mere moment of anguish before he showed the expression of a commander as he turned his calm stare at Riddhe.

"No matter who you are, I've never thought of giving you any special treatment. If there's a need, I'll naturally call you in to work, but you must definitely come back. If you can do that, I'll recognize you as an ordinary pilot."

Bright finished these words and sat back in front of the table without waiting for Riddhe to answer. In the face of these words only a commander who faced countless battles could say, Riddhe was overwhelmed by the weight of the words as he wanted to argue back *You don't say?* He quietly clenched the hands clinging onto his thighs.

I have no intention of dying. Right now, I don't have a reason for that, before I can redeem the crimes of this cursed bloodline of mine— he muttered in his frozen heart, "Yes", answered, and saluted. Bright had no intention of lifting his head as he continued to stare only at the document on the table.

Part 12[edit]

Riddhe walked out of the Captain's room, and the first thing that entered his eyes was Nigel, who was leaning on the corridor wall. He stared at the leader of the Tri-Stars who gave a silent stare, sighed and said, "I understand."

"I'll help clean the deck. Please tell the leader that I'll be there to help out."

Nigel was merely the captain of the Tri-Stars, and the mobile suit squadron of the "Ra Cailum" itself was run by another Commander. The other party was the ace here, but he had no intention of letting another man who did not know about the circumstances tell him off here. Riddhe passed by Nigel, who did not say anything, and intended to head to the mobile suit deck, "You're too rigid." but a voice caused

him to stop.

“Your heart and body are so rigid and tense. It’s rare to have a talent like yours. You’ll just end up wasting it in the end.”

He saw through me. Riddhe unconditionally felt this sense of defeat. The sunset shone in through the ship window, and Nigel showed Riddhe an eagle-like stare. Riddhe instinctively looked away and said, “I won’t cause trouble for you.” After that, he left the scene, but Nigel moved away from the wall and spoke,

“You’re a rookie who doesn’t even know the meaning of the word team? Well, us Tri-Stars do whatever we want, and there’s no need for us to give you suggestions, but I’ll shoot you down from behind if you dare to pull the Ra Cailum fleet down. You better remember that.”

Riddhe turned around to look over his shoulder, and Nigel did not let go of this opportunity as he said that viciously. *So he’s still wary of me.* He reaffirmed this sense of exclusion from the other man and convinced himself into thinking that this would make this easier, and said sarcastically, “This is a good ship!”

“A well-experienced captain, a united mobile suit squad; don’t you find this ideal?”

“Your sarcasm ain’t half bad there. Are you saying that us idiots who only know how to train are having a group orgy or something?”

“I didn’t say that. I just feel envious, because I’m…”

I can’t get into your clique anymore— these unexpected words sank into Riddhe’s stomach, and he kept quiet. Nigel eased up on the killing intent surrounding him as he gave Riddhe a surprised look. He sighed and turned his face to the communication panel on the wall.

“You should know this already, don’t you? The “Jestas” were machines that were created to support the UC plan.”

The communication panel would normally show the footage captured by the external surveillance cameras. Riddhe, who heard this for the first time, stared at the side of Nigel’s face that was starting at the sunset sky.

“The Tri-Stars were originally piloted to be test pilots of the UC plan, but it was interrupted halfway through, and we ended up having to use the support machines.”

They were machines developed to work with and support that “Unicorn”—if that was the case, it would explain why the “Jesta” that

had endurance and manoeuvrability would have different specifications from a mass-produced machine. He suppressed the throbbing in his heart as he turned towards Nigel.

“When the plan was interrupted, the “Sleeves” started to be more active in their movements. Now the entire army is desperately searching for a disguised ship that dropped onto Earth just because both sides once fought in space. In the end, even us Londo Bell is called in to help when we can’t even do anything. It’s obvious why we’re all becoming crazy here, isn’t it? If the product of the UC plan is taken away by the “Sleeves”, and if it were hidden on that disguised ship—”

“I don’t understand.”

He had no confidence that he could keep a straight face at all. In response to Riddhe’s quick response to end things, Nigel said with irony, “Me too.”

“A pilot doesn’t need a brain to look at everything. Even if the people up there are all idiots, we can only trust their decisions to fight. In this sense, I feel that our luck is rather good.”

“You’re talking about Captain Bright?”

“Yeah. Besides, he’s someone who made his career leading “Gundams” up till this point. He’s not going to be swayed easily, so you better man up.”

Nigel never stopped viewing Riddhe as an outsider throughout, and he left these words as he left the front of the communication panel. *It can’t be helped. If a supervisor sent over from the Senate Council is pretending to look like a pilot here, I’ll show that kind of attitude too.* He looked back at himself for having come so far, and suddenly felt a cutting pain in his heart. “It’s not that simple.” He said as he showed a slight smile on his face. Nigel stopped and again shot a stare full of killing intent from beyond the shoulder.

“That’s because our enemy may be that “Gundam”.”

He ignored Nigel, who gave this surprised expression, and looked at the crimson red sky on the communication panel. He was referring to that mobile suit that could open the grudge 100 years ago, the “Laplace Box”, and the boy who was chosen to be its pilot, Banagher Links. *I feel you’re a man of your word.* He shook off that voice from his mind as he stared at the sea that was dyed sunset, and a rich color that looked like it was burning intensely caused him to feel dazed. The speed of the “Ra Cailum” was the same as when he arrived, and the

sea that was like blood flowed in front of his eyes without end.

Part 13[edit]

(…The test results for the “Zee Zulu” are rather positive, and the pilots respond very quickly to it. They heaved a sigh of relief when they know that they’ll be assisting you in battle, Chairman Mahdi.)

The masked face spoke on the monitor, and Loni did not feel that it was the face of a human. The nose bridge and the lips under the mask were too refined, and the thick blond hair reminded her of a puppet. *Am I seeing a complete artificial image here?* she felt some goosebumps as she stared at Full Frontal, who was calmly smiling. “This is the strategy you set.” and heard Mahdi answer beside her.

“Once the plan to suppress Dakar is complete, our comrades around the world will take action. At that time, the chance to save her Highness Mineva will probably appear. It is my sincere wish to be able to be of assistance to the revival of Zeon.”

(Those are reassuring words. As you know, we lost our ability to fight on Earth. I’m really delighted that you’re able to go beyond your belief of religion and accept us residents of space.)

The delicate choice of words caused Loni’s father to smile in front of the console. Loni and Mahdi were the only ones in the chairman's room where phone calls were forbidden, located in a corner of the port facility that belonged to Garvey Enterprises. In the midst of this darkness, where the only light was the reflective light of the monitor, Mahdi again shot a sharp stare at Frontal. “To me, you aren’t pagans, but children who lost their God.” He said as he opened his arms hidden under his white Arab Thawb .

“We’ve inherited the Highest blessing from the last prophet, so naturally, we have to help you. Islam opens its arms to all of humanity.”

(I understand. I’ll pray for the success of this operation. Insha'Allah.)

“Sieg Zeon.”

Frontal’s smiling face was the last impression as the communication was cut off. At the same time, the room was lit up, and the light shone on Mahdi, who was sat on the leather chair, and Loni, who was sitting diagonally behind him. At this place, they had no need to care about the stares of others. Mahdi was dressed in his Thawb and a bright striped Keffiyeh, but his expression was giving a subtle message, showing that he wanted to rinse his mouth.

That was the kind of response to be expected from a straightforward

man who had to go through such social etiquette that defied his heart. Loni recalled the expression her father made when he said Sieg Zeon, and gave a bitter smile on her face. “How about it, Loni?” on hearing Mahdi’s question, she lifted her face.

“Do you think that is the son of Zeon Deikum?”

The reason why her father let her accompany him when he contacted Frontal was to affirm this. Unlike her two older brothers that were born to different mothers, Loni always had a mysterious instinct. She put her hand on her temples covered by the Hijab, “I don’t know.” and answered honestly.

“The man Char Aznable will change the way he appears according to the times.”

“Makes sense. I’ve never met Char before. Perhaps that is a descendant of Zeon who wanted to use the mask to become an idol…”

Mahdi obviously despised people who used such little tricks more than the idol worship that was a taboo. “Never mind. These are small things before the big things. For now.” He said that as he got up from the chair.

“Since the past, there were common Muslim landmarks on Africa, and the Federation government arrogantly built its capital here. Most sins would lose their meaning in front of this great sin. The Federation view those against them as terrorists, and continues to allow this opposition to exist so that they can maintain their army. In this sense, we’re the same as Neo Zeon…no issues with the feeding of information to those Federation rats, right?”

“Yes. With regards to the spies in the Intelligence Branch, I’ve already sent 4 sets of fake information to fool the enemy regarding our actual fighting ability, and I haven’t revealed them to the “Sleeves” pilots and the mechanics.”

“That’s good. Frontal will definitely take action on us based on the developments. Whether it’s the “Box” or her Highness Mineva, we know too much about the sleeves.”

“White men only know how to play tricks…do you mean that?”

“That’s right. This kind of logic works on Zinnerman too. The ones I can really believe are my relatives.”

Mahdi put his hand on Loni’s shoulder and showed the smile of a father. Loni felt a realistic sense of expectation as she stared at her father’s eyes from the front. However, not all white men were bad, and

she recalled the warmth the boy called Banagher showed as her closed lips twitched. Mahdi did not seem to notice as he used his military diver watch to check the time and retracted his hand from Loni, saying, “It’s about time.”.

“Let’s head to the port. Who knows what will happen after tomorrow.”

Those were heavy words. Loni nodded silently and forgot about the moment of hesitation as she followed her father out of the meeting room.

Part 14[edit]

The port of Garvey Enterprises was the only clear grey artificial construct located 1,500km north of Dakar, on the coastline in the Sahara region. There was a solar generator located 10km inland, but the mirrors that littered the desert looked as lonely as ever. The collecting mirrors that were gathered in a ring would absorb the sunlight and convert it into electricity through the accumulator; and after that, a microwave electricity generator system would pass the power to those that signed on for its services. The large amount of heat created when the sunlight was gathered could also be used on the treatment of harmful wastes, and one main trait of Garvey’s solar generators was that they could be used as waste disposal fields too. This port that was connected to the highway linking to the generator was an avenue of waste gathered from all over the world, and there were no issues about the ships entering and exiting this port being called garbage ships.

There were several Jin-Pole and Gantry cranes placed at the pier, and behind them was a treatment plant with a canopy above it. It had been a month since the incinerator was shut off from operations, so only the tugboats owned by Garvey Enterprises could be seen at the pier. Loni left the office building together with Mahdi and walked into a treatment plant that looked no different from a shipping warehouse. It was different from the other treatment plants that a ship could be docked directly in this pier that was covered with a canopy—the large figure of the “Shamblo” could be seen from the pier in the midst of this endless darkness in this place which resembled a large sea cave.

The red sunset was shining in front the entrance at the front, showing the mobile armor that was mostly submerged in water. Abbas and Walid were busy with the inspections, and they only noticed her after she stepped onto the boarding ramp. She saw her brothers break off from the mechanics and run over here. They had Keffiyahs wrapped around their foreheads, and she met them in the eyes before climbing the rest of the ram and stepped on the armor that was the shoulder of

the “Shamblo”. The speakers fixed in the canopy rang as the rearguard Walid climbed down the ramp, and the familiar Arabic words rang through the container hangar.

Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar. Loni heard this vague voice as she immediately kneeled down. They had to do 5 prayers every day, but Loni missed out on one as she had to guide Banagher. The mechanics at the pier too knelt down to face the distant Mediterranean Sea, the Holy Land of Mecca. Loni put her forehead at the armor of the “Shamblo”, more focused than usual.

There was a harbour in the hangar, and the exit was it was facing the East as its back faced the Atlantic Ocean. This day might be the last day she could face the Holy Land under the sun, and nobody knew whether she could do so tomorrow. As she thoroughly understood the meaning behind these words, she prayed for an umpteenth, and found a mysteriously long shadow on the harbor.

The mechanics knelt down, and the crouched figures were scattered all over the place. The shadows that stood were the “Sleeves”. These few Neo Zeon pilots that were sent over by Frontal with the marine-use “Zee Zulu”, and they did not object to living together after these few days. They looked down at the mechanics sticking their foreheads to the floor, showing a slight sneer on their faces. The practice of prayers during the week had become a rare sight in recent times, but there was no reason for them to accept the mockery of those who did not believe in God. Loni glared at the men angrily, “Don’t mind.” But she heard Madhi say this beside her.

“We can give space to those people. Just focus on increasing the number of Muslim Sons on this land. You have to give birth to many cute grandchildren for me, Loni. And you too.”

Her father continued to pray as he did not look back, and his back could be seen appearing in the dim light from the sunset shining through the window. “Yes.” Loni answered together with her brothers as she leaned her forehead onto the armor of the “Shamblo” again.

There are no Gods other than Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of the real God. Please come and pray, please come and get saved. Loni regurgitated the prayer that had become part of her psychology as she stared at the back of her father again. Back when her mother was still alive, the back of the father she looked up to seemed like a mountain, and the sight back then overlapped with the current scene as it vaguely warmed the body and mind for the upcoming crusade.

Part 15[edit]

Marida walked down the dim night road, and the street lamps showed its unsteady lights as it showed the street trees in front of her. Her hands, legs and body felt extremely heavy. *Where am I going? Why am I still walking?* Her dull brain thought as she lifted her face, and she saw pedestrians walking around with heavy footsteps.

Everyone's wearing mourning clothes. Marida thought as she noticed that she was dressed in black too. Where is this place? Who am I? *She brought her hands to her face, and she could not feel her face, which troubled her. However, she could not stop, and could only continue on in the darkness. The stretch of street trees finally ended, and an open grassland appeared in front of her, littered with countless gravestones.*

It was a stone cold graveyard. Marida was amidst one of the rows of men lined beside the coffins. The people looked exceptionally tall, and the coffin obviously had someone important in it, but she could not see it, and could not get close at all. The coffin would soon be buried if she did not hurry up.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust…the stock eulogy a pastor would give started to ring as the coffin supported by ropes started to descend slowly into the grave. The loud pumping of the heart was like another animal altogether, and the breathing was rushed as the ripping-like pain caused her to twist her body. Marida sensed that her body and mind were separated; she was forced out of the woman in mourning clothes, who moved into the crowd. The black hat was knocked off, and the girl did not care about the blond hair that was scattered and tied as she jumped into grave, sticking onto it.

"Daddy…! Who did this to you!? Who killed you? I won't forgive those people who killed you, those people who looked like they don't know anything. If this is how the world is like, I'll hate the world. I'll use everything in my power to change the stupid world men created…!"

The girl stood at the bottom of the grave, clenching her fists till they were white as she looked at the adults looking down at her, cursing them. *Is that Martha?* Marida stared at the girl who was of a similar age to hers as she muttered, and at the next moment, she was grabbed from behind and restrained onto the floor.

Several hands were grabbing onto her limbs, and the hand that was reaching from above grabbed her mouth. The tunic was removed, and she was bared before she could even struggle. And then, the heavy warmth that entered her abdomen caused her to feel despair.

Ahh, it's coming again. That thing is coming in again. That filthy man

thing is stabbing into me. I have to hang on. Marida told herself in her mind. Her slightly raised breasts were being rubbed violently, her thighs were opened to the limit, and it sounded like it was her responsibility. She asked herself, *But for what reason? Is it because I'm the only one alive? I'm not created for this in the first place. Even if my sisters and I are clones of the same person, my soul should be able to experience pain—*

"There's no need for you to endure." The girl who resembled Martha spoke from behind the men lunging at her. Marida heard that voice as her body experienced the pain of being ripped open.

"Go resist them, snap the necks of those men. You have this kind of power."

I can't do that. It's impossible for me. Marida could not move her suppressed limbs as she gave Martha a pleading look. *Please help me, tell them to stop.* Unknowingly, she reverted back to being a 10-year-old girl, and her restrained body was struggling as Martha gave her a cold observer stare. *No, you have to find an answer for you. I have no interests in the weak that forced themselves to submit. That kind of woman is only a mere tool for men.* The eyes that said this silently was dazzling beside the men's shoulders. Marida again tried to exert strength on her limbs. *I can't move. My joints feel like snapping if I try to move them now…*

"No good, is it? Why don't you just wreck yourself instead of succumbing to them? You might as well destroy everything instead of letting those stupid rules bind you. I want power to destroy the rules men made. I want to dominate those men who only know how to fight till the bitter end and rebuild this world. We have this kind of authority, and you have the power I want. Go and fight, fight those people restraining you, fight those people who robbed the "light" of the world from you. Let those men who destroy each other kneel in front of the women who gave birth."

"Light"—the only light that existed in this artificial body. The icy cold light of the abortion apparatus appeared in her mind, and she exerted strength in her limbs. She pushed aside the hands clinging onto her, and grabbed the neck of the man reaching his hands at her. The force pushing at her waist got weaker, and as the man was forced to bend up, the fingers pressing into the throat felt something hard. *Kill them, take them down. Make those people who took the "light" suffer.* Marida was prompted by the voice in her mind as she crushed that stiff feeling.

Crack. A blunt sound could be heard from the fingertips as the man's

neck dropped weakly. Marida got away from below the man before his spit and blood flowed out. Her shoulders were heaving up and down due to panting, and she looked for the other men. The men who restrained her and treated her violently unknowingly disappeared. There were male corpses lying all over the floor, and Martha could not be seen.

What appeared in Marida's sights instead was a naked girl who looked to be around 10 years old, lying beside the corpse of a man, reaching her hands at the back that could not move. *Master, get up. Why aren't you moving?* On hearing these sobbing words, Marida turned her eyes to the man she choked to death in a terrified manner. Suberoa Zinnerman's face appeared there, his mouth bleeding, and his eyeballs popping out of their sockets. His eyes were widened as he laid down amidst the pile of blood, wearing that usual old leather jacket and holding the captain's hat tightly in his hands.

"Master is broken."

The girl who had the same appearance as Marida lifted her tear-stained face. *Impossible, this is definitely a lie!!* Marida clutched her head as she ran around screaming. She broke away from the deep darkness and ran about the place without knowing where was up and bottom. No matter how she ran, the darkness showed no signs of fading away, and only the sense of killing remained on her fingers, gradually intensifying that sense of realism.

Part 16[edit]

The scream that was let out with utmost strength sounded like it was going to pierce through the soundproof glass, and the hands that were held down by metal cuff onto the armrests were opened wide. The eyes were widened in shock, and the fingers were convulsing, reacting in a way that should not be considered simply physiological. There was a switch of fear and despair in a human's mind, and if the electric charge continued to flow there, this kind of radical response would occur. One would even be reminded of a certain kind of machine—

The mind and soul could only be described as a little consolation, and the emotions humans had would have to be decided by the little differences in the electric flows inside the brain. The grotesque treatment of the brainwashing device would directly change the existence of the person itself, even vivisection would not compare to it. The headgear that was filled with electrodes were fastened onto Marida's face, and her eyes were becoming allow as her face was twisting in pain. Alberto could not help but look away from the soundproof glass that sealed the place, and it seemed that the

researchers at the console of the control room did not expect her to show such an intense expression as they went pale. The monitor indicating all sorts of lifesigns was giving off an alarm, and Martha Vist Carbine was the only one with a calm expression as she stared at the specimen in the operating room, “How is it?”

“Her temperature and pulse are showing critical values. It might be better to inject some amobarbital and continue at regular intervals.”

“The hypnotizing effect seems to be weaker than expected. We have to stop now and take a short break. Watch the blood monitor, the half-life of the drug effect in Newtypes can’t be estimated accurately at all.”

Facility Chairman Bentner heard the reports from the researcher, and answered with a stern expression. Alberto secretly heaved a sigh of relief, “No.” but it was for a fleeting moment before Martha commented,

“If we stop now, we’ll have to start again, right? I don’t have such time left. Tell them to continue.”

“But the specimen will collapse in fear by itself…”

“I don’t care. If this little thing can cause her to collapse, it means that there’s no worth in getting her.”

She said this as she stared at the face of the specimen that continued to try and call out without being able to let out a voice, and nobody could argue with her about this. Bentner balanced the possibility of losing such a precious specimen and the possibility of losing his position as the facility chairman as his eyes dulled. “Continue the experiment.” The instruction rang through the control room. “But…”, the researcher looked back to question, “Just continue.” But Bentner told the researcher off as he started to operate on the console himself.

Marida’s limbs were still fastened onto the chair as her body started to arch up like it was electrocuted. The researchers gave her a stare, checking the response in her eyes, but had no intention of wiping away the saliva rising from her lips. Alberto saw Martha’s unmoved expression as he opened his mouth, but could not say anything as he lowered his head. He immediately turned around and stepped towards the door of the control room.

“Where are you going?”

Martha suddenly said without looking away from Marida. Shocked, Alberto stopped in his tracks.

“You mustn’t run away. You have to look at her properly. That’s the kind of respect you must show to her.”

These words came as a surprise to Alberto, “Respect…?” Alberto parroted the words in his mouth, and Martha did not look at him in the eyes as she continued,

“This is her battle against me. If you have any intention of taking over the Foundation, you have to watch this battle until the end. You have to see for yourself how people turn rogue.”

She looked like she found her other side from the other person as her face gave a self-mocking smile while she stared at the operating room. Martha suggested that the content of the hypnotism was to be based on herself. Another mental state was corroding her own—and if Marida was showing such a rejection because of the clash between those two, Martha would undoubtedly be fighting against her. Perhaps this was a tussle where both parties betted on their own existences. Alberto did not have the courage to look back and leave as he stared at Marida inside the operating table. Her body was like a puppet controlled by electricity, convulsing continuously as her direct and strong-willed eyes were gradually losing their light. That delicate body that stood up for him would become another thing with the same skin…

What’s with this maddening pain that’s scratching at my flesh? Alberto put his hand on his throbbing chest as he turned his bothered stare to the floor. He was not reluctant about seeing the process of someone changing, but he did not want to see Marida change. These intangible words form a doubt in his heart, and he looked back at Marida behind the glass. She was in utmost pain, but her lower chin could only be described as beautiful, and a throbbing that was stronger than before immediately passed through the hand he pressed on his chest.

Chapter 3[edit]

06:06[edit]

The port of Dakar was located at the North-Eastern area of the plateau where the political and economic hub was. The port was completely filled with harbor facilities, and the grey seawall continued to extend to the neighboring Hann Bel-Air industrial zone. Including the artificial pier that formed a harbor, the water body stretched on for more than 30km, and there were only more than 200 ships moving within the harbor. The Dakar port was not some eye-opening large port, but it was a major base of production and energy generation filled with Gas Complexes and metal, chemical plants built on reclaimed land. To the locals who had enterprises coming in, it was an integral facility for logistic functions.

The average water depth of the harbor was 50m, but as a part of the seabed was dug up artificially, most of the water depth was around 25m. The block that was 100m deep from the pier was a relic of a “refuge trench”, built for the Federation army spaceships to dock—the absurd strategy to let the marine ships have the same density as spaceships and sink them to prevent enemy bombardment was acted here. In fact, most of the ships that once sank into the sea could not be used, and had no chance to be used in the refuge trench of Dakar’s port. However, the chiselled-out stretch remained as they were, and the submerged waterway leading to the port weaved under the sea like a giant snake. As for the security level of the capital, these completely useless facilities became relics with negative effects that caused blind spots. They could only let the sea’s radar network, the Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) gather here.

On May 1st, the SOSUS detected a strange source of sound, and Dakar, which was in the Greenwich Meridian, was at 6.06am. two mobile suits, the RAG-79 “Aqua GMs” that belonged to the Federation navy, submerged to the bottom of Dakar’s port located 100m at the wharf wall, and started to clean up the sludge that piled at the bottom of the sea. They landed, activated their sensors to maximum output, and started to move to the port in the sea.

The machine of the “Aqua GMs” had jet units all over the place, and the shoulders that also functioned as ballast tanks were as high as the head. For a GM-type mobile suit that was lean and streamlined, this “Aqua GM” looked rather crude in its silhouette. It was built hastily during the War, was hardly improved on, and was not really easy to pilot. The massive block-shaped body had old-looking colors on it, but the Federation had no better amphibious mobile suits. The spaceship with the Minovsky Craft installed was flying in the sky above, and mobile suits gained wings called SFS at this point, so this amphibious mobile suit that could attack the enemy from underwater lost its advantage for a long time. The weakened Zeon remnants would naturally be unable to extend their forces to submerged motherships if it did not factor in the weakness of it not being easily usable. The Federation itself had half forgotten about it too.

But no matter the kind of machine, there would be people who would put their hearts and efforts in developments. One of the “Aqua GMs” that landed on the port of Dakar was piloted by Captain Feido, codenamed with the Call Sign Harpoon 1. He was a pilot of the amphibious mobile suit ever since the One Year War. The Zeon amphibious mobile suits had launched raids on the coast many times, cutting ship supplies, and terrorized the seas on Earth. At this point,

they had disappeared, but the underwater was a world that could not be surveyed easily even by watching, a place filled with natural Minovsky Particles called water. Even if the “GM III” rode on the Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) to stand guard, some situations require diving underwater for a response. This confidence caused the pilot to give up many chances of changing vocations and retraining as he continued to be an amphibious unit pilot. To him, this was a rare opportunity for him to prove his point. After the Federation navy submarine “Bonefish” met its demise, the tale of an Atlantic Ocean monster “Sea Ghost” suddenly became very realistic. Many used to see it as a malfunction of the SOSUS, and they did not even have any antisubmarine measures at that time. However, that attack was detected extremely close to Dakar, and was determined to be the doing of a Zeon submarine.

It would take some time before the allied submarines that departed would arrive here. If there were really an enemy unit submerged, there would be no doubts that the diving team’s mobile suits would be the only ones that could deal with it. Feido stared at the LCAC hovering over his head, let the “Aqua GM” charge right at the port and descend to the seabed 150m deep. The amount of light was such that it was impossible to see a hand stretched out in front with the naked eye, and all the all-view monitor CG could determine were the sunk ships and reefs. Feido used the night-vision camera and sonar to determine the situation in the sea, and activated the optical fiber communication channel once the “Aqua GM” called Harpoon 2 landed behind.

The communication was carried out by active sonar that started to spread. The sonar from Harpoon 2 started to let out a sharp echo in response to Feido’s unit that was flickering its light from the visor, and the unit then used the jet units on its back and waist to stamp off the seabed. The machine was holding a torpedo missile launcher in its hands, and gradually floated like a diver, swinging its arms as it swam over to the other side of the reefs that overlapped the “Water GM”. The water surface that looked like an aurora would not even let through the light of a star, and the machine immediately merged into the veil of thick seawater.

The pinger on the sea surface would let out sounds at regular intervals, creating a perimeter on the sea where the Sea Ghost was. Also, one could discover a sonar buoy that was casted down for the anti-submarine machines. There was a tanker that was veering greatly to the left, and it definitely changed course because of the LCAC that was on patrolling requesting it to change its course. There were not a lot of ships that were entering and exiting the port, but there was a

need to work together with the coast guards and regulate the transport inside the port completely, if the raid would only end after noon. Once the enterprises and media express their unhappiness over the economic loss, the first party to be affected would be the navy. Feido did not have the time to even curse as he let his unit navigate towards the open sea.

The “Aqua GM” machine became a lot lighter as it released the seawater from its high pressure ballast tanks. The machine left behind a trail of water flowing as it left the seabed. The “rescue trench” dug during the war and the seabed that could be seen appeared in his eyes, and he spotted a black shaped object moving out from the shadows of a sunken ship.

It looked like a mobile suit, but it was not a GM-type. The machine had arched surfaces all over it, and its head was located in its short and stout frame. Its relaxed arms were not holding any weapons, and in fact, given the shape of the hands, it was impossible for it to “wield” any weapons. The end of the arms that looked extremely fat looked like a class when viewed together with its head, and the silhouette of that thing which looked like a shelled crustacean was practically—

“…No way.”

That silhouette was reminiscent of the Zeon Repulic army’s “Z’Gok” amphibious mobile suit. *Is it a remnant of the War?* Feido could not even confirm what he just saw as he stared at the ghost-like figure. *It’s impossible for such a thing to appear in this age now. I don’t know if there’s really a Sea Ghost at the bottom of the sea or the dead souls of those who should have died off in the War—but everything is planned too perfectly.* Feido tried to convince himself with a bitter smile, but something leaped up from behind the “Aqua GM”, rocking the cockpit with a tremendous shockwave.

“What’s that…?”

The mechanical hand that had 5 fingers reached over from the back, covering the main camera. The vision of the all-view monitor was covered by something, and Feido immediately pressed the message button of the pinger to report this emergency.

The Harpoon 2 will immediately realize something was amiss once it hears the soundwaves that moves 4 times faster than in air. Even if I’m to be sunk here, I should be able to leave it to him. That was what Feido planned, but the active sonar of the machine remained silent as the sonar communicator could not take effect. That was because the arm of the “Aqua GM” that was suppressed from behind covered the

sonar signal located on the mask.

The right arm of the machine was completely restrained too, and he could not fire the torpedo launcher that was equipped to its arm. Feido tried his best to move the “Aqua GM”s left hand and pull the beam pike from the waist. He considered the fact that the beam would be negated in water, and that it would only release the beam when making contact with the enemy armor, but the beam pike fell to the bottom of the sea before he could make use of its abilities. The enemy wrecked the pinger, quickly raised its other arm, and used the heat knife to stab through the cockpit of the “Aqua GM”.

The macromolecular compound ceramic-type blade broke through 3 layers of armor and reached right into the cockpit. Feido’s body was first sliced in half by the blade, and the blade that had electricity charged through let out an intense heat. The cockpit that was burnt together with its pilot let out a small explosion, and the cracks of the armor let out several bubbles and conducting liquid. The frozen body of the machine fell forward, and an arm reached out from behind to support the “Aqua GM” that had become a corpse before it could make any unnecessary noises. The mobile suit—the “Zee Zulu” let the enemy machine lie down on the seabed as it bled out conducting fluids and lit its head to signal its allied machine.

It raised the heat knife it was wielding in its hand, and its 3 sharp claws built on the side of its forearm provided a contrast to it, creating a crab-like silhouette on the machine. The black shadows that received the signal were of the same structure started to move, and though they looked similar to the amphibious machines Zeon made in the past, they were just a form the “Zee Zulu” possessed.

The basic structure of this machine was not too different from the main line of mobile suits “Geara Zulu” Neo Zeon used. However, the “Zee Zulu” looked vastly different once it was equipped with claws for close combated and vest-shaped diving equipment. The ballast tanks latched around the neck made it difficult to see the actual outline of the head and the body, while the fins on its legs made it look extremely big on its ends. It was humanoid and yet not humanoid, and was an oddly-shaped machine that could be called a demon in the sea—it inherited the genetics of the amphibious mobile suits Zeon had. The “Zee Zulu” moved out from the blind spot created by the sunken ship, and used the reefs as cover as it quickly approached the other “Aqua GM”. The moment it made contact, it used its sharp claws bent as a hook to rip

through the abdomen of the enemy unit.

The pilot of Harpoon 2 did not manage to understand what was going on as the “Zee Zulu” immediately used its claws to rip the cockpit together with the pilot inside. It ignored its allied unit that was planning to take the next action as it let out a signal from its pinger. The large amount of soundwaves with different frequencies from the Federation mobile suits was released from the sea spread through several kilometers, and a 3rd “Zee Zulu” received these sounds through the SOSUS sonar receptor.

The 3rd “Zee Zulu” used its heat knife to club the cable of the sonar receptor as a response, and let its fin feet leave the floor. The machine moved to the port, and soon after, the reefs behind it started to rumble and create a large amount of dust that slowly floated up. The large black mass looked like a floating shell, and the artificial object showed the glow of its monoeye at the center, revealing its true identity as it followed the “Zee Zulu” and approached Dakar.

The Sea Ghost—the “Shamblo” hovered above the sonar receptors that were not working as their cables got cut, and showed its actual body and started to move forward. The sonar receptors on the sea would not detect the sound of the MHD propeller units moving forward, and the machine would not be affected by the perimeter of the pingers. The pingers were set beyond the range of the SOSUS so that the sonar receptors would not be overly burdened.

Of course, the controllers of the SOSUS would immediately realize that the cables were snapped, but it would be too late by the time the navy understood the situation and arrived. Dakar was right in front of the “Shamblo”, and Madhi Garvery grinned as he stared at the edge of the “Refuge Trench” on the main monitor. It was so easy for an enemy to invade Dakar, the capital of the most powerful organization in history, the Earth Federation government.

“It’s about time.”

Madhi said some unnecessary words. He looked down and saw his 3 children that were wearing pilot suits, Abbas, Walid and Loni. He was wearing a helmet with the corporate logo of Garvey Enterprises on it. The 17 opened leaves of the palm branch were surrounded by a circle, and the logo was designed off the bird-eye’s view blueprint of Palm Island, an artificial island that was built on the sea off Dubai. The consoles and seats of the cockpit had the same picture on them as well. The construction of the “Shamblo” was assisted by Zeon, so they had to show the logo of Zeon on the surface. This little logo however showed the real heart of the “Descendant of Dubai” quietly.

The “Shamblo” followed the 3 “Zee Zulu” and transformed into cruise mode as it approached Dakar. The pot of Dakar basked under the morning sunlight, reflecting it off the surface, not detecting the monster rumbling underwater.

06:20[edit]

The 3 main thrusters installed at the tail of the ship took the momentum released by the fusion hybrid engines and let out a rumbling sound. The hot air that was whipped up caused the sand and dust to rise, covering the body of the 112m ship that stood vertically, and the “Garencieres” finally started to move.

The ship was merely ascending slowly at first, and after several seconds, the unique triangular prism broke free from the exhaust and the dust storms and rose into the skies. The ship entered the blue sky vertically like a rocket that was launched a long time ago, creating a slightly tilted pillar of cloud in the Sahara Desert.

The “Garencieres” was not equipped with a Minovsky Craft, and could not move freely under gravity and rise in the air. Like an ordinary spacecraft, it could only lift itself through its streamlined body and fly without losing its speed. The “Garencieres” blew by the clouds and drew a long arch as it entered the stratosphere, tilting horizontally in a gradual manner as it continued its flight. The G-force that struck the ship gradually lost its momentum, and the bodies that were pressed down on the chairs were finally regaining their sense of up and down. Zimmerman heaved a sigh and relaxed his hands as he moved them away from the handles of the captain’s seat. Sitting at the navigation seat and steering seat were Flaste and Alec, and they too relaxed their shoulders as they turned back to their respective consoles.

“Current altitude is 9,800m. Fusion cores are in good condition.”

“All hands, remove acceleration guard. We’ll be flying horizontally. Estimated time of arrival in Dakar is 0800. Mobile suits related crew, standby. Deck crew, start inspecting the ship and check all parts and tools under gravity conditions carefully.”

Alec continued off from Flaste and used the microphone to pass the message through the ship in a stiff tone. This man’s steering skills were the real deal, but he continued to show a tense expression, probably because he could not accept the fact that he was taking over for Gilboa. *Don’t be nervous.* Zimmerman wanted to speak up, but he immediately kept quiet after noticing that his mouth was dry. He took a sip of drinking water, and muttered in his heart, *I really have no right to tell other people off here. If I’m not tense, I won’t even think of crashing*

into the capital of the Earth Federation—

“A little more than an hour before we reach Dakar…it’ll be easy if we’re just going there.”

Flaste probably sensed Zimmerman’s feelings as he let out these words. It had been two days since they got back from Dakar, and as the ship was busy with the preparations and resupply, he did not have time to talk, but there was no doubts that he had suspicions regarding this operation. “Looks like you have something to say?” Flaste, who was looking at the water, glanced behind from the navigation seat, shrugged and said, “I have nothing to argue about this.”

“But it’s a big thing to attack Dakar. Once the compromise with the Federation is broken, we might have a 3rd Neo Zeon war if it’s not dealt with properly. Instead of saying that it doesn’t feel realistic, I really can’t guess what Frontal’s thinking as I look at this situation …” “The lead in this operation is Madhi Garvey. We just have to drop the “Unicorn” above Dakar and let it land safely on the parliament hall. What we can do after that is to wait for the Laplace Program to unravel its seal.”

Of course, we can’t just remained relaxed like this. Flaste avoided the sharp stare from Zimmerman, “I understand here.” and continued.

“We can understand that they deliberately chose to take action during Congress recess so that the Senators supporting Zeon would not be affected. However, didn’t Lord Madhi say that he wanted to destroy all the power on Dakar? Even if that guy’s titled the “Descendant of Dubai”, he’s a big shot who hasn’t tasted military food before. Who knows whether we can believe in what he plans to do…”

“That’s why we need to assign escorts for the “Unicorn” and give it weapons to launch. If things go bad, we can drop the machine and retreat immediately—”

“Nope, if Madhi’s daring to say that, it means that he has a powerful ace up his sleeve. We might end up being controlled if we let an outsider handle that.”

Just like how the “Unicorn” ended up controlling Banagher. Flaste threw these unexpected words, causing Zimmerman to be caught off guard, worrying him inside. Flaste sensed his silent expression and sighed before turning back to the console, “And Frontal never met with Madhi directly, right?”

“We also have to consider the intentions of those hiding behind the back of the Republic, right? To what extent are those guys willing to

help Neo Zeon? I don't think that the Republic has the power to withstand the Federation's counterattack before it gets broken up…is the value of the "Laplace Box" really worth using the entire Neo Zeon for exchange?"

He expressed his doubts too directly, and even Alec beside him turned an uneasy stare over. At this point—no, it was because it was at this point that they had to check whether they were on stable footing or not, and everyone had this kind of thought. Up till this point, both sides had been detouring around to avoid a certain predicament, as everything would end if they met up directly. At this moment, the situation was right in front of their eyes. Zimmerman looked at his chest that was hiding its indecisiveness and bit his lips tights to prevent himself from saying what he really thought. He then answered with the callousness of a commander, "I can say that what happened before already showed the value of the "Box"."

"The Federation and the Vist Foundation are having bloodshot eyes while chasing after it. No matter what's inside, it's worth exchanging for one or two capitals. However, what we have to take note of is—"

"Banagher's side, right?"

Flaste answered first, showing his unhappiness over this superficial answer in his eyes. "…That's right." Zimmerman answered as he looked away awkwardly.

"He's willing to listen to the instructions now, but it's going to be hard to tell what will happen when he witnesses Dakar being attacked. If he's really intending to fight, our forces alone won't be enough to stop him."

Zimmerman said this and went silent with a concerned feeling. He brought Banagher along to the desert and treated him like a crew member just to prevent this aforementioned situation; Flaste knew about this, and the main crew members were notified as well. There was no such thing as unpaid kindness in this world. The "Unicorn" would move according to the heart, the pilot's mental state and open a way to the "Box". Thus, it was all the more reasonable to try and pull him over to their side…*but am I really doing all that for this?*

He could not tell. Zimmerman never had pure intentions in the first place, and he admitted his own hypocrisy as he darted his stare out of the window to look at the dull-looking blue sky. He would be in for a long time if he expressed his own doubts about this operation, but he did not have the thought of objecting to this in his heart. Banagher was not the only one being fooled; all the crew members on this "Garencieres" were the same. He fooled the grudging flesh and souls,

and even though it had nothing to do with the revival of Zeon, the first person he fooled when he chose to enter the battlefield and run away was himself, not anyone else.

Whether it was Zimmerman or Madhi or even possibly Frontal, that lie was starting to break due to the series of incidents surrounding the “Box”, and that was why everyone was starting to panic. It did not matter whether the “Box” truly existed or not, they just needed to create an opportunity. It was just like what Madhi said, they waited too long. *We’re tired of waiting, we have to take action before we forget, even if we will have to meet with the ugly battles they kept avoiding, even if that path of blood repaid upon blood will only lead to destruction—*

“Well, I don’t think we have to worry about that guy.”

Flaste suddenly raised a relaxed voice. Zimmerman recovered from his deep thoughts and looked up.

“That guy has completely believed in you, captain.”

Flaste’s eyes had a hidden honest light that reached the soul, completely different from his casual tone. *We believe in you too, captain.* Zimmerman could not stand his expression that was saying this as he looked away. The white sun that just rose looked overly dazzling to his eyes that were deprived of sleep.

06:35[edit]

Anyone would look larger when lying down, whether they’re humans or mobile suits. The mobile suit deck tilted 90 degrees inside the “Garencieres” that was flying horizontally, and the machines that were docked inside naturally fell onto the floor, held down by the restrains. The “Unicorn” that was lying horizontally on the hangar looked mighty, and could be aptly described as a giant.

“I put two beam Gatling guns on the left arm’s mounting rack. It uses a special connecting frame, so the aiming and firing operating is combined together. Of course, the operating of the shield won’t be affected.”

The mechanic Tomura, who had been assigned to maintain the “Unicorn” ever since it was taken back, said this. It seemed that it did not matter to him who he was talking to as long as it was about machines, so there was no sign of any awkwardness on his face. His 30+-looking face was lightly sprinkled with moustache, and Banagher could see a splitting image of Takuya on him as he stared at the “Unicorn” that was equipped with the Beam Gatling guns. The Gatling

guns were originally meant as an additional armament for the “Kshatriya”, and at this moment, they were mounted and attached to the forearms of the “Unicorn”. The long barrels that were mounted together caused the machine to look rather bulky. A total of 8 gun muzzles were pointing out from the shield, showing an intimidating presence, and anyone would imagine the devastation they would have when they were used.

In the end, he was still forced to take part in the battle due to the circumstances. He planned the landing at the Central parliament hall to unravel the seal of the Laplace Program. It would be Madhi Garvey’s job to suppress Dakar, and the chances of the “Unicorn” being involved in the battle were not high, but it was impossible to tell without actually being at the scene. Banagher adjusted the collar of the pilot suit and covered up the suffocating feeling rising up in him, “Won’t this make it heavier?” he raised his primary concern.

“Logically, you should be able to adjust through the AMBAC settings. If you don’t want to use a weapon that’s too heavy, do you want the rifle —beam magnum? It has only 1 shot left, and you can just leave it here. However, it might help the balance of the machine. Well, the power output of the “Unicorn” does make things easy.”

Banagher looked at the personal beam rifle that was hanging on the equipment rack at the other side of the hangar, and felt his heart sink somewhat. The Magnum cartridge could unleash the energy of 4 normal rifle shots in a single shot, and though the power would more or less be negated under the atmosphere, one would wonder what consequences would there be if it was used in the city. As he gulped, Tomura patted him on the shoulder and gave a bitter smile, saying, “Don’t think of it as such a serious thing.”

“Bringing it along is just a precaution here. Your guards Ivan and Kwani are both veterans, and there’s nothing to worry if you listen to their instructions. Besides, the battle should be over once you reach Dakar.”

The nonchalant voice caused Banagher to remember the face of another veteran mobile suit pilot, Gilboa. Tomura and the other crew members would not actually show that they were mourning over the absence of Gilboa, at least in front of Banagher, and he did not know whether they were being considerate about him, or that war would cause emotions to numb gradually. “I’m not really concerned.” He simply said this as he stepped onto the ladder leading to the cockpit. He reached the platform that was extended out of the cockpit and turned his stare that was saddled with heavy emotions he could not

leave aside at the “Unicorn”.

“It’s weird. I didn’t think Neo Zeon weapons fit so well with Federation mobile suits.”

“That’s because both sides are of universal specifications. The mounts are interchangeable too.”

“Both sides can find a common ground here, so why can’t they stop fighting?”

“During the course of a war, this is the only aspect of technology people become familiar with. The manufacturer’s the same anyway, so it’s more efficient to unify the specifications.”

“So this is for Anaheim Corporation’s convenience?”

“And for on-site convenience too. It’s helping now, isn’t it?”

Tomura answered from behind the handle of the platform, and his face was telling Banagher that it was pointless to think too much into it. *If there were an economy that could live only by war, would it not be obvious to make everything efficient?* Banagher digested on this bitter understanding as he climbed down to the cockpit at his feet. He ducked his head into the seat that was facing up, and attached the back of the pilot suit with the attachments. The standby power source was activated, and the CG image of the “Unicorn” equipping itself with the Beam Magnum appeared on the condition window.

He knew that it was stupid of him to ride a Neo Zeon ship and wait for the launch, but he had to do this in order to reveal the true identity of the “Box”. He let his finger slide onto the touch panel of the display board, checked the position of the cockpit he had not rode on for a long time, and suddenly stopped once he detected Daguza’s scent.

The assistance seat beside the linear seat was still inside the all-view monitor, and nothing showed that Daguza was once here. *If the battle hasn’t ended, what will happen if I end up having to fight the Federation? No matter what excuse I find, it’ll be against what Daguza hoped to do, isn’t it?* No matter how he questioned himself, Banagher could not find an answer, and he clenched his fists tight. The atmosphere shook the ship, creating a rumbling sound that breezed by his ears. It was telling him that he was gradually closing in on Dakar—

06:40[edit]

At this point, petroleum resources were declared to have been depleted since a long time ago, but though the tankers that travelled across oceans had virtually disappeared, but this did not mean that

tankers themselves lost their importance. Natural gas were as depleted as oil fields themselves, but there were still unstable gas hydrate veins even after a long time since such mining technology was devised, and the natural gas that was extracted from these parts continued to be used as raw materials for the chemical or urban gas industries. The method of using pipes to transport it directly, and also the method of transporting liquidised gas by ship had continued on since the old age, and this kind of work was handed by the companies shipping the Liquefied Natural gas (LNG). Amongst the ships that were moving to and from Dakar, a ship approximately 200,000 square meters was considered the largest-class of “guests”, and such large ships that were easily mistaken for space motherships when viewed from afar would often move around the industrial area.

The “Zeus IX” was affected by the marine navigation controls the Federation navy implemented, and had to make a huge detour as a result. It was one of the LNG ships. The flat hull that was common for a tanker had a thin low-temperature heat sink that came with membranes, and the squared storage tank that was like a huge container exposed a little part on this open-aired deck. It was 350m in length, but the total number of crew members, including the captain, was less than 15 due to the grace of automation. The liquefied gas the ship was carrying would be sent to a LNG chain located in Bel-Air industrial area, and this was one of the necessary procedures required in the automated process when the gas is to be transported from the tanks to the containers. As long as they dock the ship onto a sea berth, the port’s facilities would take the necessary measures.

It was 6.40am. The “Zeus IX” docked at Dakar’s harbor 20 minutes later than expected, and it arrived at the 23rd sea berth the LNG chain designated. The tugboats, which were equipped with buffers at the bow, positioned themselves on both bow and stern as according to the instructions of the maritime pilots, which were sent from the harbor management, and the large tanker that had a capacity of 200,000 tonnes was silently nudged into its sea berth. At this phase, the docking was practically complete. The captain stared at the backs of the sea maritime pilots that were skilfully doing their job, and heaved a sigh of relief. However, that was before the tremors under his feet came about, shaking the bridge.

The feeling of colliding into a reef came from below as the impact struck, and the ship felt like it was being gouged over and over again as the tremors continued. The “Refuge Trench” here was originally meant for spaceships, and was 100m in depth, so there was no reason for the “Zeus IX” to meet any reefs at this point when its draft depth

was 21m deep. The captain's feet were tangled by the continuous tremors as he rushed to the window in front. He saw that the tank on the open-aired deck was alright, and was about to designate someone to carry out safety checks, but at that moment, something from the outboard appeared at the edge of his sights.

That object sliced through the sea surface, and as a large amount of water flowed down, it raised what looked like "claws". It had sharp "claws", two on top and one at the bottom that could bite, reminiscent of a raptor's foot. It was impossible to measure using the scale of heavy machinery, and the large "claws" that was no less than 30m long when completely appeared sliced down onto the open-aired deck, letting out a huge boom at the scene as the metal sank in. The captain inadvertently covered his ears and saw the "claws" sink into the broadside and pierce through the tank on the deck. The handrail of the broadside was twisted, and the nickel-iron alloy that formed the tank was ripped through like paper. The volatile gas immediately escaped from the crack, and a white steam covered the entire open-aired deck.

Once the LNG that was stored below -160 degrees Celsius became volatile, the moisture in the air would freeze, and the extremely cold gas that was heavier than air would remain around. That kind of low temperature caused the "claws" stabbed into the tank to freeze, creating a thin layer of ice around the surrounding sea surface, but this level alone was not enough to slow the movements of the "claws". It discarded the ice columns that was made of frozen seawater, and stabbed deeper into the tank, opening a large hole as if it wanted to rip it out together with the portside. The gas started to leak at an explosive rate, and as it made contact with the outside temperature, it got less dense, becoming white steam clouds that covered the "Zeus IX".

At this rate, the bridge and everyone inside would be frozen together. The siren rang loudly, and the captain immediately ordered everyone on the bridge to evacuate. He had already left the window that was starting to freeze, and the other crew members were intending to escape from the bridge, but none of them could escape outside.

It was unknown whether it was due to the sparks were created due to the ripping of the wall, or that the owner of the "claw" deliberately triggered it. No matter the reason, the "Zeus IX" that was covered in steam let out intense heat at a certain point, causing the gas that reached its kindling point to burst into flames. This kind of flame would burn slower than oil, but the crimson-red flames still covered the ship in an instant, prompting the liquefied gas that was stored inside to ignite as well. The liquefied gas vaporized completely, and the gas body expanded to several hundred times as it burst through the tank,

penetrating through the double-layered hull that surrounded the tank. The “Zeus IX” had a large scale explosion from inside, and the large impact caused a shockwave that spread into Dakar.

The expanded flame caused the tugboats around it to be crushed and overturned immediately, and the tip of the fire slowly rose to the skies in a slow motion-like manner. The shockwaves created a mini-tsunami that struck at the wharf, and the loud sound of the explosion reached the center of the city, but no one could understand the situation immediately. The ones to take initial action were the Dakar patrol squad mobile suits stationed at the harbor; they immediately got into battle formation once they witnessed the mushroom cloud that rose and started to approach the place where the explosion took place.

The two propulsion propellers roared, and the bottom of the LCAC broke the waves as it mowed forward. The RGM-86R “GM IIIs” that were lying on the LCAC readied their beam rifles and fired. Once they got news that they lost contact with the diving team, the pilots responded quickly and intended to search for the enemy units that seemed to have enter the harbor. However, these people that were attracted by the burning tanker did not know that there was an unexpected situation happening, ready to strike them.

The plateau region opposite the Bel-Air industrial zeone had a row of waterfront warehouse. If one were to look over from the place where transport trucks would not stop at, the burning remains of the tanker looked no different from a red-hot tong offshore. At this point, the sea surface off the uay was rising, and the large “claws” showed itself with a large amount of water. The “claw” swung down at the neighboring port, the gantry cranes used for lifting cargo were knocked down like paper, and the three sharp blades immediately sank into the concrete ground.

The flexible robot arm supporting the “claw” let out a tremor from its armor, and the main body that had been submerged underwater all this time was starting to rise up. The sea surface rose again, the “legs” that were attached to the arms appeared on the surface, and the “head” with the monoeye, the “body” that had the silhouette of a living being appeared in order. Once all the parts were shown, that hill-like large body was covered by the sun, and the harbor that was stabbed in by the “claws” was covered by a short moment of darkness. The seawater rained down like a waterfall, the object used its massive mass that was several times more than a ship to crush the harbor, and it used the outstretched “claw” on its other leg to stab into the wharf and climb onto land slowly.

The large leg that resembled an elephant's stabbed through a truck together with the wharf, and the air-cushioned rear that resembled a hermit crab shell rumbled. The "claws" that were brought in together with its legs underwater moved with the help of its flexible robotic arms that were like independent arms, and the reddish-brown color of the machine machine matched its appearance, giving the vibe of a lobster. The armor that extended sideways from its groin was reminiscent of bat wings, and the head that was protruding out from this gap was giving off the flair of a reptile. The image all the parts gave was of bits and pieces, but that mysterious combination felt like a mad chimera—the "Shamblo" that had transformed into its land form pushed aside the Jin-Poles in its way as it landed, and the sharp claws that were fixed on the flexible arm swung down at the waterfront warehouses.

The roofs over the waterfront warehouses were crushed easily, and the sharp claws punctured the containers inside deeply. The flexible robot arm pulled its leg forward, crushing the remaining warehouses as it moved forward. This large body, which had a maximum height of 32m and more than 70m in length, would bring about a carpet bombing-like destruction on the ground just by moving forward. With the assistance of the air cushion at its rear, the "Shamblo" trampled over the waterfront warehouses that were leveled and started to advance to the center of Dakar.

To the "GM III" squadron that was moving over the sea to the burning tanker, it looked like a mountain range made of steel moving. There was less than 4km from there to the parliament house at the plateau area, and there was no need to second-guess what the enemy's objective was. They hurriedly turned around and rushed over to the object that looked like a mobile armor. However, their movements were detected by the "Zee Zulu" squad hidden underwater.

The three "Zee Zulus" readied their combat claws on their forehands and approached the LCAC hovering over the water. Both sides crossed paths, and the claw easily stabbed through the bottom of the LCAC that was made of vulcanized rubber as it tumbled and stopped working. The machine lost its balance greatly as it was pulled down by the inertia of 40 knots, and the "GM III" that were knocked off the LCAC fell into the water. The non-amphibious mobile suit would not drown, but there was no reason for it to function properly in the water. While they were confused, the pilot frantically tried to identify their positions, but what appeared in front of them were heat knives that swung straight down.

Once the "Zee Zulu" stabbed its heat knife through the cockpit of the "GM III", it immediately pulled back and moved away from the bubbles

and conducting fluids. The other “Zee Zulus” dealt with their prey and submerged underwater again to wait for any enemy forces that would arrive next. Everything happened underwater, and some time would be required before the Dakar defense squad could grasp what was going on and take appropriate action. The burning tanker and the sunk LCACs were merely the results of an unknown situation at this point—and the “Shamblo” did not care about that commotion as it moved its oddly-shaped silhouette to the plateau area.

The large body triggered a quake, and an emergency siren rang through the streets. That buzzing sound finally rang through the speakers all over the city after several years, creating a commotion on the streets that were still sleepy in the morning. Sirens that had a tinge of a looming disaster shook the air in Dakar.

07:02[edit]

“You’re saying Dakar’s attacked by the enemy?”

While the news to activate the anti-air surveillance branch was to be announced, he was in the captain room, washing his face to wake himself up. Bright rushed into the bridge and asked loudly, and once he heard First Officer Meran answer with a serious expression, “It’s a report from the Senate Council”, he felt like his breathing was blocked.

“An air raid? How many enemies are there?”

“I don’t know. The Senate Council itself doesn’t seem like it grasped the situation either. Our satellite link with the Dakar security is cut off too.”

Minovsky particles—no matter whether they were scattered by either ally or foe, the scale of battle was definitely abnormal. *This is definitely not a trivial matter,* he exchanged looks with Meran who said that, and turned to look at the navigation screen behind him to roughly estimate the estimated time required from their current position to Dakar. It had been more than 20 minutes since the “Ra Cailum” received the report of a launch exhaust from what looked like a VTOL ship and head off to the Western Sahara. The battleship that was still in the process of accelerating had already passed over the Libyan desert, and there was still less than 5000km distance left before they reached Dakar. If they considered the accelerating and decelerating, it would be approximately an hour later before they reached Dakar. It was impossible to shorten the time further due to the ship’s acceleration functions under the atmosphere. Even if they moved towards space first before rushing down to the atmosphere, they would end up moving over Dakar at this distance. *So we can only rush over to Dakar*

directly in the sky?—

“All hands, get to second alert. Mobile suit squad, standby.”

Bright’s lips moved before he could make a conclusion. *There’s no time, and there’s no need to wait for instructions from the Senate Council. Get to the scene first and confirm the situation.* The Londo Bell Task Force was granted an unconditional authority to do as they please during an emergency intrusion on the Federation government. “Our ship will now head to Dakar. Hurry up on plotting the shortest navigation course, equip a booster onto the Base Jabbers and get them onto the catapult decks together with the “Jestas” on standby.” Bright gave the orders he could think of immediately as he sat on the captain’s seat at the middle of the bridge. The ordinary bridge length of a “Ra Cailum”-class was more 15m, and the breadth was 6m strong, forming a horizontally structure. There were 8 crew members under the navigation branch, and soon after the alarm rang, two duty staff members that were on standby to assist during an alert situation rushed to the scene, and the bridge was filled with activities that were somewhat tense.

“Depending on the situation, we may open the battle bridge. All departments, check the circuits!” Meran yelled with a gruff voice and showed a battle-hardened face he had not shown after 3 years. No matter how much they educated, it was impossible to create such an atmosphere during training. Bright sensed that the fatigue he endured for the past few days was cleared off, “What are they planning…” as he mused to himself. For the past 2 days, the “Ra Cailum” rushed over to the Middle East, merely to detect the movements of the Zeon remnants forces. However, their bases that were scattered in the desert showed no signs of movements. It was unknown where this enemy came from, either from above ground or from below. “Does it have something to do with the VTOL ship that was reported?” Meran, who was standing beside the captain’s seat, added on uietly,

“If the exhaust fumes detected in the Western Sahara is from that “Garencieres”…”

“That is a possibility, but I don’t think it has the capability to take down Dakar. If the “Laplace Box” is on that ship, the logical thinking would be to return to space first.”

“I heard that “Palau” was abandoned. Is it possible for those “Sleeves” to launch an all-or-nothing attack after losing their base?”

“Those men of the man who called himself another coming of Char aren’t that simple-minded…we lost the initiative, I guess.”

These excessive words caused Meran to frown. Was the entire series of incidents starting from “industrial 7” related to this assault on Dakar? It was impossible to discern with just the information Ronan Marcenas provided. There should be a more complicated and deeply rooted reason that existed behind these incidents, just like the “Laplace Box” term that was filled with mystery. He knew that as long as he could not approach that core, he would become a chess piece that was easily to manipulate, always dwelling outside the situation.

He wanted information. This information he wanted need not be filtered by principles or benefits. A she thought about this, he remembered the faces of several people he was familiar with. “EWA, Uniform 011 is going to launch.” The voice of the communications operator rang, “Tell them to hurry up.” and Bright immediately answered back instinctly.

“There might be a need to continue. Tell the pilots to remain on standby and get ready to launch.”

“Understood. Informing mobile suit team.”

“Control room, your response is too slow. What are you doing!”

Once the situation began, his body that was used to responding started to move. He roared into the wireless communicator of the bridge as he observed the movements of the crew that had become dull after approximately 3 years, and endured the anxiety in his heart as he looked forward. *I have to get the correct information before I get manipulated.* As the ship rumbled due to the acceleration, this thought quickly fastened itself within Bright’s heart.

07:09[edit]

The shoulders were equipped with electronic units large enough to cover the head, and the EWAC “Jesta” looked like a headless machine as a result. The EWAC that was equipped with large sensor machines on the mounts located on both arms looked really amped up as it left the mobile suit deck first; it passed through the air lock linked to the catapult deck and vanished from their sights.

The catapult was equipped with a Base Jabber, and the mission of the EWAC machine was to ride on it, head to the frontlines to collect information to send back to the mothership. The Base Jabber the mobile suit was riding on had a speed of less than 1 Mach, but if it was externally equipped with a booster and stood on the catapult deck, it would reach Dakar faster than the battleship that would have to spend time accelerating and decelerating. Even if it reached the place earlier by 10 minutes, this precious distance alone would be enough to

determine the fate of the battlefield.

There would be a burden felt inside the ship that was accelerating would move, as if the body was moving up a slope. The airlock was released, and the mobile suit deck that was removed from its pressure state lacked sufficient oxygen. Thus, Riddhe saw the EWAC leave through his helmet visor. He immediately ran towards the wall of the catwalk and used the gondola of the hangar to slip into the cockpit of the “Delta Plus”. The reason why he ended up diving in and ended up landing diagonally on the linear seat was because he was used to zero gravity conditions. He was wrapped tightly by his own pilot suit, and could not help but have the wrong impression that he was in space.

“Watch it! There’s gravity here!”

Sergeant Hanna poked her upper body into the cockpit, let their helmets touch, and lashed out at Riddhe. She, who was assigned as the personal mechanic officer for the “Delta Plus”, was considered an expert mechanic on the “Ra Cailum”. Her face lacked makeup, and the blond hair that was tied backwards lacked charm, but Riddhe felt that there was nothing to be picky about when it came to a woman he was working with, simply because she did not take special care of him just because of his background. “Roger that!” he shouted back, and grabbed his hurting neck as he pulled the display board in front. The power was already activated, and the all-view monitor showed the majestic sight of the vast mobile suit deck and the RGM-96X “Jestas” lined on the deck.

Including the EWAC machine that launched and a machine that was docked at the overhaul space, there were 12 mobile suits in the ship. They moved the “ReZELs” and the “Jegans” they had away and switched them with unproven new models, simply because this voyage was limited only for experimental frames. He saw that the crew of the “Ra Cailum” were like him, troubled over this unexpected situation, and could only fight back desperately. As he suddenly thought about it, he pondered, *What is the enemy planning by attacking the capital this time?* (Uniform 001 to all units.) As Riddhe thought about this, this voice from the wireless communicator caused him to prick his ears.

(Once the frontline determines the situation, Solton’s squadron will launch first. Based on the developments on the battle, we may let Dalton’s squadron move all. All machines, maintain current position and remain on standby.)

Uniform 1—Commander Solton, who was the mobile suit squad leader on the Ra Cailum, had a voice that sounded overly clean. Riddhe could not help but lift his head, and he stared at the face shown on the

communication window. Solton's squad that included Nigel and the Tri-Stars had 6 machines together, and Dalton's squadron that was led by lieutenant Commander Dalton had 6 machines too. Riddhe however did not belong to any squadron. (Everyone grasped the traits of the "Jestas"? There're people who lack actual combat experience though…) Solton's voice continued on, and Riddhe frantically yelled, "Please wait!"

"Who's commanding my Romeo 008?"

(The Romeo 008 is excluded from the order. Please wait on standby inside the ship.)

"Please let me join in too! I won't be able to fulfill the order the Senate Council told me to do directly if I remain inside the ship."

On the other side of the communication window, Solton's sharp nose still looked very distinct from behind the visor as he turned his ferocious looking stare over. Riddhe could sense the stares of the other people who were listening through the wireless communicator, but he could not bother himself with this. No matter what the objective of the enemy was, the attack on Dakar was most likely related to the "Box". If he could not get himself involved in this, there would be no point for him to stay here.

(This notification will not change. We have a limited number of Base Jabbers. The leading suad doesn't have the room to let you join.)

"The "Delta Plus" is a transformable mobile suit. It should be able to fly on its own even in gravity—"

(I said that the notification will not change.)

Solton's cold voice indicated that this was the final straw. Riddhe could not spit on the words he swallowed, as he understood that the other man was not trying to make things difficult for him. They could not let an unknown new member join the squad, as there were be a level of uncertainty in the battle. As a commander, Solton made the correct decision, but Riddhe, who understood this, planned to fulfill the duty of his "family". He again sensed this pain that was cutting him inside out as he was ripped by the two sides to him. At this moment, he head a voice interrupt, (Captain).

(There are 6 Base Jabbers, and the Base Jabbers for the leading squad has to return to the mothership before Dalton's squadron can launch. Considering this, if we use the Romeo 008 as a substitute for the leading squad, we can leave one of those Base Jabbers behind.)

Nigel barged into the communication window, showing an expression that was hard to determine like usual. Solton too recognized the ability of the Tri-Stars, and this debate caused the atmosphere to show signs of wavering through the wireless communicator.

(In contrast, one of those won't have to come back. Maybe the leading squad alone can carry out an independent attack from both air and ground.)

(But…)

(If we can leave the Base Jabber to the squadron launching later, the machines that are in charge of battle can continue to remain in the air. If we look at how we can assure our communication—)

(I understand. Then, Romeo 008, launch with the leading squad. The Tri-Stars are to watch over you.)

Both sides clashed during the "welcoming ceremony", so there would be no problem for a new member to be left to the Tri-Stars. Solton showed his flair as someone with battle experience as he quickly changed his conclusion, (I'll notify everyone of the specifics later. That's all) he left behind these words and disappeared from the communication window. Riddhe lost the chance to thank him, and looked at the window. Nigel's eyes could not be read, *What do you*

mean by this? and he cut off his communication window from Riddhe's sights as Riddhe could not get a response.

(Don't be mistaken.)

What replaced it was Watt's voice that came from another channel. (We haven't recognized your skills yet. Leader Nigel's just caring about efficiency.)

(Yeah, but you still owe us a favor. You better tell us what direct order the Senate Council told you directly.)

Daryl too spoke from another channel. These people were originally test pilots for the UC project, and this was most probably a pressing issue to them who were involved in the truth in this incident. Once he vaguely understood this, he let his body sink deeply into the linear seat. *If I can tell people about what's going on that easily, I won't have to go through so much trouble.* He grumbled in his heart, and a rumbling shook the bottom of his belly as the cranes and trolleys on the deck started to tremble.

The sound came from the EWAC machine that was to launch first, and the Base Jabber that was ferrying it lit its booster rockets. The catapult that followed the linear trigger let out a unique operating sound, and once the two sounds overlapped, the boom from the booster rocket gradually moved off in the direction of the bow. The next moment after it was launched, an extremely loud noise comparable to that of an explosion came from the other side of the partition wall, and Riddhe seemed to see an illusion of the Base Jabber letting out a long trail of exhaust. It was moving faster than the mothership that was moving beyond supersonic speed, flying right at Dakar with a bullet-like trajectory—

Hope you can reach there quickly. Riddhe recalled the scenes of Dakar when his father brought him there in his younger days, and could not help but clench his fists.

07:24[edit]

There was a residential area in the plateau area where the political and economic hub existed. Most of them were official residences for high-class cadres, but some of them were clustered residences for several enterprises, meant to be used as dormitories, and these houses formed a quiet condominium zone amongst the elites in Dakar.

It was because the area had both the functions of a living area and a working area that the morning was late. There was less than 2km from this place to the office buildings, and it was possible to attend work on

time even if they left their homes at 8.30am, if they were using public or private transport. Thus, every family would normally wake up after 7am. However, this day was different, as there was an emergency alarm that rang before 7am, forcefully waking up the residents from their slumber.

(We'll continue to provide you the latest news. The military is currently defending Dakar harbor. An evacuation order is given to the plateau area, and all residents there are to evacuate from the area. Those within the affected areas, please continue to keep your televisions and radios on and evacuate as calmly as possible. You should reduce the amount of luggage you have to the bare minimum…)

Something sounded like it landed nearby, causing a quake which shook the windows of the buildings nearby, and the announcer that looked tense when speaking became fuzzy on the screen. The satellite television could not receive the signal, and noise was the only thing that could be picked up from the portable televisions and radios. A housewife who was watching to the news was married to a husband working in an ocean consultant industry located in the plateau area. She gave up on identifying the words on the screen that was telling them to evacuation and left the television. She took out the firefighting pack from her stuff and slung I over her shoulder. All the residents of Dakar were tasked with a responsibility to have a firefighting pack ever since the time when they were occupied 9 years ago, but she never thought that the day would come for her to use it. She let her 5 year old child carry a child-use pack and quickly stuffed a change of clothes and bottles into the bag. "HURRY UP!" she lashed out at her husband who was at the washing basin. "I KNOW THAT!" her husband yelled back while looking half-asleep.

"Don't tell me this is a fire drill?"

"Why would such a sound be made during a drill? Here, hurry up too, Mitch!"

The son, who was studying at a kindergarten in the city, was staring at the live television feed, giving an expression that showed that he did not understand what was going on at all. He saw black smoke coming out from the harbor from the telecast and even pointed at the television nonchalantly, saying, "Ah, it's Pointe Bernard." The housewife carried that little body and walked towards the corridor. They were living on the 25th floor of this high-rise condominium, and the housewife frantically reached her hand for the door, thinking that if this were to keep up, it was likely that the elevator would stop working. At this moment, the loudest explosion at this point echoed through the

surroundings, and the floor of the floor rose by several centimeters.

The sound of the utensils breaking and things collapsing immediately rang afterwards. “WHAT’S GOING ON!?” her husband came running to the window, and the housewife carried her child as she got to his side. They opened the window that continued to shake and arrived onto the veranda. The view of this veranda was not really good as there was a high-rise condominium that was of the same height as it, however, the roof of the condominium on the opposite side was letting out flames and smoke that rose up. It was a paranormal-like scene they had never seen before, right in front of their eyes. The black smoke rose, and the mushroom cloud expanded in space as several fireballs gradually expanded all over from the bottom of this fire. The fireballs drew a high arch as it landed right in the middle of the city, and the housewife witnessed one of them flying right at them.

Something thin and long that was burning let out an expanding trail of black smoke “What the?” “The hand…?” this conversation she had with her husband became her last money. “It’s a hand!” the child that was being carried called out, and it was too late by the time the family intended to leave the veranda as that object the condominium they were living in directly.

The “GM III” let the explosion snap through its arm as it passed through the upper levels of the condominium, crushing several floors of different levels as it got itself anchored deeply into the building. The artificial fingers were buried under the rubble, and dust mixed with glass fragments exploded out, covering the entire condominium. Two mobile suits flew above this condominium, seemingly trying to blow the dust away, but this had nothing to do with the people who were crushed together with the buildings.

The 6 “GM IIIs” that were moving in pairs continued to leap as they rushed off to the harbor. Whenever they landed, the asphalt would show cracks, and the fusion rockets jets on their backs were creating hot winds as they lifted these large bodies. The front “GMIII” turned its back on a truck that was blown aside due to the wind pressure and landed on the Boulevard de l’Arsenal. It immediately hide inside the blind spot of the building and raised the beam rifle it held in the right hand at the street. There was an oddly-shaped mobile armor landing at the direction where the gun was pointed.

That mobile armor could be described as either a prawn or a hermit crab as it wriggled its body and reached its large claws in front in an intimidating manner. Even if it were a wide street, it was impossible for any building to remain unscathed when this mobile armor passed by.

After it climbed past, there was a path of charred rubble from the harbor to this point, and also a large hole that showed the explosion of a mobile suit. It remained for a short moment before it swung its unexpected agile claws to crush the building. The “GM IIIs” retreated to the intersection room together with the scattered rubble.

They could not approach the enemy easily. There was an opening at the armor near the groin, and it was the nozzle of a spreading mega-particle cannon that the “GM IIIs” feared. As long as it glowed, the artificial light would cackle and devastate the scene, causing the surrounding buildings and roads to be melted and blown apart.

“It’s hard to tell from its appearance, but it’s flying really quickly. Don’t stand forward too much!”

“Anyway, lure it out of the city and force it back to the harbor!”

That was a code the “GM III” pilots had. As the first pilot head off to attract the attention of the mobile armor, the other 5 machines would use the opportunity to scatter and surround the enemy before aiming the beam rifles from the blind spots of the buildings. Unlike the “GM IIIs” that could easily dodge past a 6-level building, the full height of this mobile armor was approximately 10 levels tall, and the width it occupied was more than twice that of a building. When extended fully, the full length of the sharp claws would likely reach 100m, and it was more difficult to miss it. However, the beams fired by the 6 “GM IIIs” did not hurt the mobile armor at all.

The mobile armor opened the container block shutter protruding from its back before it was surrounded, and fired small objects into the air. 10 of such objects that looked like shells came sputtering out from the container block. When seen from afar, these objects looked like flying bullets, lit their vernier thrusters and used their thrust force to remain in the air.

That objects that looked like small balloons started to open up 3 prongs, showing parts that looked like flower petals, radiating a mirror like glow. The reflective bits surrounding the mobile armor looked like they had a will of their own as they quickly moved around to block the mega-particle beams that flew in from all directions. Like a mirror reflecting light, the beams of extremely hot particles were reflected at the speed light, causing the straight beams to be twisted and deflected off into an unexpected direction.

The beams that were deflected pierced through the buildings, roads and the cockpits of the “GM IIIs”. Two “GM IIIs” were hit directly by the beams their allies fired, and lost their functions as they collapsed into

explosions of flames. The scattered armor shrapnel blew the street lights, and new black smoke rose up the streets that were already filled with smoke.

“It deflected the beams…?”

By the time the squad leader realized this, the surviving subordinates were already firing their beams with reckless abandon, causing two more “GM IIIs” to be crushed by the deflected beams. The reddish-brown machine frame was surrounded by the lights of the explosion as the mobile armor continued to move forward as if nothing happened. The reflective bits acted like small fish that surrounding the big fish as they swayed around in the air together. Its monoeye was flickering amidst the gap of the part that suspiciously resembled a head. The squad leader let his emotions explode within him as he detected that inhuman monstrous stare from that stare. He landed on the road and let the machine draw the beam saber. The “GM III” fired its beam at the mobile armor to hold it off, and charged right into the enemy’s clutches.

“You bastard!”

He would have a chance of winning as long as he could break through the defensive line of the bits and duck inside the mobile armor. He darted in a zig-zag and raised his beam saber to hack at the mobile armor, but the sharp claws that moved quickly were faster, and the “GM III” was crushed before it could even retreat. It was grabbed by the claws that were of the same height and raised high, becoming a humanoid hammer smashing buildings on both lef and right side. The machine was thrown into the air twice, thrice, and finally slammed into the ground headlong. The head of the “GM III” was crushed headlong as it was slammed to the ground at supersonic speed, and the squad leader who was thrown off the linear seat had his neck broken as he died immediately. However, this was nothing to the mobile armor. It casted aside the “GM III” that became a wrecked puppet and raised the claws, using them as shovels of a bulldozer as it destroyed the buildings in its way while moving forwad.

The dome-shaped hover that formed the tail supported its large body, and the two mini-Minovsky Crafts located between its legs created an I-field at the feet. The overly massive claws could move on its own flexibly through the recoil against the ground, and the “Shamblo”, which obtained the power of the Minovsky Crafts that would really take effect on the ground, proceeded forward like it was shaking on ice, using its large body to crush the buildings in the office area. To the people that were finally starting to evacuate, it looked just like a steel

“monsters”, and this level of panic and confusion that could not be triggered by a mere air raid dominated the plateau region. Buildings would fall whenever this body that looked like a small hill moved, and the storm of dust created a brown turbidity on the streets. The waterfall of rubble and glass rained down on the people who did not know where to run to, and the vehicles that were crushed by the pressure from the explosions slammed into the show windows of the department stores.

The pilots of the TINCOD II, Federation fighter jets that launched from Dakar’s air base, witnessed that hellish scene from 1000m above. All transformable mobile suits were sent to the factories for inspection, and the Dakar air defense forces did not have any forces other than the TINCOD II. The pilots were planning to assist from sideways as they sortied, but the situation in front of them defied all expectations they had. The first line of mobile suits that should be standing their ground were wrecked without a trace, and the mobile armor that took nay a scratch continued to proceed on.

(The beam weapons aren’t effective on the target. Permitting the use of air-to-ground missiles. Stop the target in its tracks.)

“But, the evacuation…!”

The pilot could not help but exclaim as he witnessed the ferocity of the mobile armor from the canopy. He could see the public wriggling through the ranks from behind the dust and smoke that remained. There was less than 200m from the rear end of the group to the target, and there were quite a few people who could not run away in time as they remained at the target’s feet. There was no need to imagine further the effects of the bullets, but the anti-air defense bureau’s order was not to be overturned.

(Our utmost priority is to prevent the target from approaching the parliamentary hall. Begin the attack.)

There was no other choice. There were also residential areas on the way to the parliamentary hall. The pilot immediately closed his eyes and casted the colors of the countless clothing from his sights, “Affirmative, beginning attack”, and pulled the control stick. The TINCOD II rose in height together with its allied machines and fired the air-to-ground missiles from below its wings.

The array of missiles rained down from the two machines that followed, and the shells rushed to the mobile armor, dragging several trails of white smoke. At that moment, the mega-particles cannon of the mobile armor let out a glow, and the reflective bits that were

hovering around were dyed with the same color. The beams that should be fired in all directions were fired at the bits, and the reflected beams bounced off the bits, creating a net of light. The light of light became a barrier of lightning that sparkled greatly, causing the missiles that flew in directly to be covered with a layer of hi-heat particle membrane.

The fireballs continued to expand, and the explosion-like smoke covered the mobile armor. The wind pressure crushed the glass of the surrounding buildings, and the people and vehicles that could not get away in time were blown away like toys. However, the target did not look to be damaged in any way. The missiles were shot down before they could reach the mobile armor, and were exploded.

“A beam barrier…it’s using that as a barrier!?”

The fighter jet passed by from above and abruptly turned around once it flew out of the harbor. The pilot took the G-force that struck tremendously and switched the weapon control to the Vulcan guns. *If the barrier is created by reflected beams, it should not be able to maintain it for a long time. I’ll continue to fire and break through the barrier, and if I’m successful, I might be able to shoot a bit down.* The pilot thought of this strategy in less than a second, gave an indication to his allies, and turned his reticule on the heads-up display to aim at the back of the target. The moment he placed his fingers on the trigger, the mobile armor suddenly turned around and quickly lifted its thin and long head.

The head that looked like that of a snake’s split down from top to bottom, and the cover on both left and right sides split apart like a large snake opening its mouth wide. The mooneye of the mobile armor let out a mysterious glow, and the large caliber mega particle cannon let out a spark for just an instant before a thick beam flew right at the fighter jet squad that was approaching.

The mobile armor head, which was supported by a snake belly-like construct, continued to fire the beam from its mouth as it tilted slightly to the right. The beam that moved together swept the sky like a fan, and the fighter jets that were not designed to be armored were crumpled like paper planes in the face of this mega particle beam that could match an enemy’s cannon. The TIN Cod II that touched the belt of light was instantly bared from its armor, and the pilots were cremated before they could identify the light. The 2 fighter jets that were hit directly were nearly charred completely, and the machines that lost their original shape remained in the air. The remaining two fighter jets were knocked off by the impact, and ended up crashing

inside the city before they could press the emergency escape function.

The fighter jets that crashed exploded immediately, causing a new fire to rise in Dakar. Mahdi Garvery stared at the black smoke that filled the screen on the wall, and could not help but laugh. *The "Shamblo" has fulfilled its projected capabilities, and even if all of Dakar's forces were gathered, they can't cause any damage to it. The Federation military that thoroughly believed that there will be no large-scale skirmish is so fragile here.*

Abbas is in charge of piloting, Walid is in charge of searching the enemy, and Loni is in charge of using the psycommu to control the reflective bits and set an iron-wall defense on the "Shamblo" . There's no need to worry about the controls of my three children. With the bits barrier around, the "Shamblo" is unmatched in anti-air capabilities. Dakar's mobile suits aren't worthy of fear, and the "Zee Zulus" are holding off the enemy reinforcements from the sea. The Federation won't be able to handle this unless they drop a nuclear missile or a Thermobaric bomb, but they can't possibly have the guys to use these weapons in the center of the capital.

"Location 147, a fighter jet squadron is closing in again."

"There're mobile suits in front too. There are mobile suits gathered around the parliament. 6 GM-types and for tanks."

"Anti-air!"

Abbas and Walid reported, while Loni's clear voice was mixed in. The sharpness of the senses caused the psycommu function to increase, driving the hatred the reflective bits had for the enemy. Mahdi felt satisfied by how the bits would deflect the enemy beams like organisms gathering and scattering over and over again, and stared at the high-rise building of the Hotel Empire that was beyond the swirling flames. The building that was 150 levels tall looked exceptionally tall, and this skyscraper, which represented the Western civilization, ignored the hell right below its eyes as it stood tall looking like it had nothing to do with its surroundings—

"Abbas, turn the machine to 178."

Mahdi suddenly had a violent impulse within him as he ordered. "Attack target, Hotel Empire. Prepare to fire the main cannon."

The three people seated at the front jerked their shoulders. "The hotel, you say?" Abbas was the first one to turn around and ask, and Mahdi, who saw Loni widen her eyes too, argued back, "That's not a hotel, that's a symbol."

“It symbols the civilization of the white men who stained our Muslim territory and devoured this Earth to the brink of destruction.”

“But father, that is a place unrelated to the battle. We’ll just end up flaming the hatred others have of us if we meaninglessly increase the damage.”

Loni ignored her two brothers who were unable to speak up as she got up from her seat and gave a tense look at her father. Mahdi took her stare “Loni, those people used to mock us.” and said silently,

“A barbarians who’ll only imitate the white men on the surface, but is still hanging their knives on their waists…that’s how those people viewed me. Whether it’s the receptionist, the door, or any guest that brushed by, I can tell from their eyes even if they wouldn’t say it. Those people sold their souls to the society of white men, no matter the color of the skin. To those people, we’re just caged animals, pitiful beasts that are reared in the zoo to exchange for the self-satisfaction of a multi-cultural society.”

Am I crazy? Mahdi asked himself in a corner of his mind, *Then let me go crazy.* and then answered his own question as he looked away from the speechless Loni. *Father, grandfather, Loni’s mother, they all died in despair and hatred. I could only keep living to vent the regrets of those souls. I interacted with top-class education and culture in those white men’s society, and continued to be an alien that hated them. I tasted the feelings of bitterness, deceit and infidelity, I lived through such a life full of oxymorons, and it’s to be expected that I’ll lose my mind, but it’s all for this day. What should I do if I don’t unleash my madness? Who’s the one causing me to go mad!?*

“The white men killed God and dumped the excess humans into space. They built their own private club on this planet. That arrogant tower that mocks God has to be destroyed. Attack!”

The “Shamblo” opened its mouth again and exposed the mega particle cannon as it lifted its head. Once the bits deflected the enemy shots, the high-output beam caused the surrounding air to ionize, and the torrent of light flew in a straight line, and struck the Hotel Empire direct.

The beam pierced through the building in the center, and the 53rd to 59th levels were burned through as the beam immediately cut through it. This alone caused several hundred people to be vaporized when they were evacuating, but the mega-particle beam that lasted for 2 seconds did not just fire through the beam, but also caused a sweeping devastation at that angle.

The beam that pierced through the building swung from left to right, causing the ugly charred black trail to be scattered on the exterior of glass. The Hotel Empire was sliced through horizontally, and 3 quarters of its volume was burned off as another 7 levels of space was hollowed out—naturally, Hotel Empire was divided into 2 with the vanished part as the border.

The dust continued to rain down like a landslide, and the higher levels that lost their support started to tilt down slowly. It continued to tumble and break up before finally lying horizontally on the ground in the form of burning hot dirt and dust that was several thousand tons, covering the group of skyscrapers below it. The rubble, glass, humans that were mixed together hailed down from above, and the surrounding buildings and streets were crushed under the debris. The original shape of the surrounding buildings were gradually breaking up, and the higher levels that barely managed to maintain the shape of a high level ended up leaning on them, causing the buildings to crush under the pressure, creating a loud shattering that rang through the city.

The tsunami of dust covered all roads that could be considered roads, and devoured the people who were overcome with fear as it continued to expand. The “Shamblo” remained in this brown fog and turned to where the parliament hall was. The mouth that opened looked like it was going to swallow the sky, and the silhouette of a monster roaring appeared from behind the dust.

08:13[edit]

(Is everyone seeing it here!? The Hotel Empire just collapsed! It sounds like a pillar supporting the land collapsing. The dust and hot air are blowing over here…!)

“There’s a live telecast from Dakar now!” a certain someone called out. It had been 10 minutes since the “Garencieres” reached the battlezone, and they completed a check on all areas before they launched.

About 10 members were on the mobile suit deck, scattered in a corner. Banagher saw that the two escort pilots were joining in, and left the cockpit of the “Unicorn” to head to the last row. The communication panel on the received the signal of the live television feed and aired the footage. Banagher saw the image of the skyscraper that was taken from above the sea. The entire city looked like it was burning, and over there, half of Dakar’s skyscrapers were already razed to a sea of dust —

(Who’s starting this kind of attack, and for what reason? We do not

know the full details. Unconfirmed reports have pointed out there was a logo of Neo Zeon on this weapon called a mobile armor…ah, it's firing its beam again! Is that a Federation mobile suit exploding? It's so loud. I don't know if I should stay here and report the news for long…)

The noise that got stronger drowned out the words afterwards, and the light of the explosion that radiated on the panel could not be seen. It was a miracle that they could receive a television feed on the television feed when the Minovsky Particles were scattered around. The crew remained silent, and as the crew gulped, Banagher too stared at the breaking footage that was taken from Dakar. One could see a new mushroom cloud blowing up from the other side of the noise. He understood that the high-rise building that was sliced in the middle was the Hotel empire where he had his meeting with meeting. The trail of destruction carried on from the harbor like a tremendously large bulldozer, and at the front of it was an abnormally shaped object that was giving off light…if seen from above, that mobile armor looked like a beetle with its wings opened. It trampled everything in its path and caused the horrifying devastation to expand. All of that could be seen on the panel.

What is going on here? The streets he walked on with Loni, the city beside the sea where Zimmerman gave him a toast, all these things were gradually disappearing like they were being erased. It was like "Industrial 7"—no, even then, he could feel that both ally and foe were trying to keep damage to the minimum. This however had no signs of it. That machine was destroying and destroying over and over again. It looked like it was deliberately raising hatred, maximizing damage and showing itself off.

"Isn't this too one-sided…?"

"Is that the machine the "Descendant of Dubai" is piloting?"

The crew muttered with pale expressions. Tomura stared at the movements of the mobile armor, looking completely speechless by this scene of curb-stomping. *Is this what it means to attack Dakar? Is this the doing of the man called Mahdi Garvey?* Banagher felt his heart beat wildly as the blood rushed up to his head, making him dizzy, and he clenched his fists. *That's the job I've been assigned? I have to wait for Dakar to be leveled under this destruction and let the "Unicorn" land on the desginated coordinates? Is this the "situation" that I admitted I'm a part of?*

I can't accept this. I won't accept the people who allowed such a thing, or the me that thought I understood the situation and let others arrange for me to enter. Banagher took a step back from the wall of people

surrounding the communication panel, looked up at the “Unicorn” that was quietly lying horizontally, and moved away from them.

He moved from the mobile suit deck and head down the corridor leading to the bow. He endured the urge to remove the pilot suit and throw it away, used his hand to unlock the airlock, and dashed down to the bridge at the end of the path. *Something’s definitely wrong here. This should be something unexpected to everyone.* He continued to convince his throbbing chest as he arrived in front of the cabin door glowing with red light, and barged into the bridge in a lunging manner.

The “Garencieres” bridge that had 3 fixed crew members was only as wide as a passenger aircraft pilot room. The captain’s seat could be seen right beside the door as he entered, and the navigation and steering seat were a step below, lined side by side with each other. Banagher used his hand to block the light that immediately shone in from the front, and looked at Zinnerman who was seated on the captain’s seat, looking rather surprised and looking away immediately afterwards. Banagher realized that there was something unnatural about him, and was about to call out, *Captain* , but his words were stuck in his mouth.

The monitor image on the console was airing the live telecast from Dakar. Banagher saw that Zinnerman was not willing to turn his face to look at him, and passed through the door. “The optical sensor is reacting! A ship-class!” Flaste said, and a shocked Banagher looked over in front again.

“Coordinates 302, approximately 600 distance. Class…seems like a Ra Cailum-class. Target’s currently dropping in height. Looks like it intends to enter Dakar by the coast.” The block-shaped noise was shown on the ceiling screen, and there was the silhouette of a ship after CG correction. A white ship could be seen moving through the clouds, and even Banagher could tell that it was a Federation spaceship. “Is that the Londo Bell flagship?” Zinnerman mused, and Flaste turned to him and asked, “What do we do?” Zinnerman then turned to glance at Banagher, and answered,

“We better not take action. That “Shamblo” mobile armor has an iron wall-like anti-air defense. It’s impossible for them to approach Dakar easily even with reinforcements.”

The stare that met for a short moment turned away immediately, and Zinnerman continued, “Notify Mahdi first. A laser communication probably won’t work even in this situation. The sight of Dakar covered with dust and black smoke was in front of his eyes. *He knew—he knew the truth about Mahdi’s operation, and that I would come*

here. Banagher felt like he was toppled over by the pressure of that stubborn face, but continued inside the room. The automatic door closed in behind him, indicating that he could not retreat, and the sound rang sounded exceptionally loud.

08:15[edit]

"…That's right. The enemy has a powerful cannon and an anti-beam weapon. It's suicidal to approach from the air. You have to stop it from the Base Jabber."

The G-force weakened as the deceleration took part, and they could witness Dakar directly on the visual from afar, 5 minutes away from where they were. Bright affirmed the destruction that was more thorough than whatever he had expected, and he gave this order with a suppressed tone. Squad leader Solton was on the monitor panel as he answered anxiously, (Can we use the ship's cannons to hold it off and create an opening for the mobile suit squad to attack it directly?)

"No. The enemy has created a mirror barrier that can deflect mega-particles. If we carelessly fire our cannons at it, the city will be destroyed by the deflected shots.

There was the term "reflector bits" in the ship database search engine. That was a psycommu weapon used by the Federation army during the Gryphs Conflict, and there were signs that this technology landed in Neo Zeon's hands thereafter. Leaving aside the logo printed on the mobile armor, was it possible that Neo Zeon was the one doing this? The EWAC machine that left first could not even approach within a 10km radius, and Bright felt that something was amiss as he stared at the vague visual from afar and frowned. The "Ra Cailum" was in first level alert, and inside the bridge, Meran, who just finished making contact with another end, stealthily handed a piece of handwritten piece. Bright received it, "We've just made contact with the Dakar security squad." and then spoke into the voice receiver.

"They'll send over the hovers used by the mobile suit. Solton squadron is to ride on those and approach Dakar by sea."

(That takes too much time…!)

"But we're forced to do so in the first place. The information shows that there are enemy marine mobile suits hidden underwater, so you have to split up, land outside the city, flank it from both sides and lure it out of the city. Looking at how it's attacking, I'm guessing that the enemy is definitely aiming for the parliament hall."

Once they could identify its objective, they would be able to set up a

formation to surround it. The mobile armor had to destroy all obstacles in its way, so it was not moving too quickly. (Are they intending to hold the parliament hostage?), Solton asked, and Bright answered, “I don’t know. There should be a break in the parliament.” However, he was flabbergasted by something abnormal. *Right, there’s no point in occupying an empty parliament here. There’s no consistency in this strategy. The enemy’s just attacking to destroy over and over again—like it’s trying to release the grudges it held within for years.*

As expected, this is obviously different from what Neo Zeon used to do. It is plausible that they would send a colony or asteroid crashing down to destroy its target, but it’s not their mindset to trample onto a city directly while hearing the cries of those near them. But why? Bright questioned his mind that lacked information, and ended up slowing down in his decision-making completely. He gritted his teeth, (Please allow me to make a suggestion!) but another voice rang, causing him to lift his head again.

(Please let Romeo 008 head to the scene first. If it’s the transformable “Delta Plus”, it can attack independently even when fighting alone. I can lure the enemy’s attention before the main forces land.)

Ensign Riddhe appeared on the communication monitor and stated his own opinion. Bright was overwhelmed by that concentrated expression, and lost his opportunity to chide off the other party for arguing as he immediately answered, “You’ll be shot down!” However, Riddhe did not show any signs of fear as he answered, (I’ll let an unmanned Base Jabber follow me too.)

(We can use the Base Jabber as a shield, and I’ll retreat before it gets shot down. I’ll then transform into the waverider and attack from low altitude. As long as I use the buildings as a shield, I should be able to hide from the enemy’s eyes.)

That sounds reasonable. Bright immediately made this decision, “What do you feel, squad leader Solton?” and asked through the open channel. In response, the mobile suit squadron leader Solton answered, (With regards to Romeo 008, I wish to let you decide, captain.), his voice filled with an emotion that was beyond anxiousness, one of astonishment, and Bright could tell that he was hinting that another pilot was to be summoned into this call.

“Lieutenant Nigel, are you listening? What do you think?”

(He’s a load that can’t coordinate with the squad, so isn’t it good that he does whatever he pleases?)

Nigel did not show a change in his subtle expression, but it seemed that he had already prepared an answer. Those words were harsh, but he would only use this tone when an opponent he recognized was involved. “There’s also need to send someone to guide the landing forces.” Bright confirmed Meran’s expression as he said this, snorted out, and held onto the receiver of the wireless communicator again.

“Alright, we’ll have Ensign Riddhe head down to the scene first. However, your mission is to scout. Don’t proceed too deeply.”

08:22[edit]

The hatch of the starboard catapult deck was opened, and a strong wind blew into the bridge with a terrifying roar. The decelerating G-force was barely felt, but the “Ra Cailum” ship was still approaching at supersonic speed. The catapult decks on both sides looked like they were elevated, and the sound of them clattering continued to ring into the ears. Riddhe isolated the sounds that came in through the armor from his consciousness as he held onto the control set. The “Delta Plus” that was moving used its arm to grab the handle of the Base Jabber, and several indicators were lit on the display board.

(Path is clear. Romeo 008, prepare for launch.)

The voice of the communications operator rang. It was the meticulous voice of a man. *How’s Mihiro and the rest of the “Nahel Argama” doing?* Riddhe suddenly thought of this, but felt that it was pointless to think too much as he shook his head. (Lord Ensign, don’t be anxious.) Nigel then spoke up, causing him to lift his eyes that were looking down.

(I’m being honest here. I won’t be able to wake up well if you die in battle.)

“I understand. Dakar is a place I’m familiar with. I’ll go over to prepare the way first.”

(The capital’s like your backyard, huh? As expected of the prince of a Senator.) Daryl uttered som sarcastic words from another channel. (We haven’t settled our battle against you, so don’t die off on us first.) Watts too interjected, “Understood.” And Riddhe answered. *Hating words could be considered a form of mental stabilizer. Looks like I’m more suited to being a pilot.* Riddhe harbored such a bitter and hurtful feeling as he immediately casted them away and turned his tense face to the front again.

“Riddhe Marcenas, Romeo 008. Launching!”

The Base Jabber gently floated towards the lateral slip facing the outboard, and left the mothership with the headwind blowing. The “Delta Plus” that was clinging onto this Base Jabber lowered its posture, and Riddhe tried his best to endure the wind pressure that was stronger than what he expected. He saw the “Ra Cailum” move away from him in front as he proceeded to lower his height, and as he overlooked the coastline of Cape Verde, he let the machine glide down to a low height of 50m above the water. The mothership that was moving off of the coast of Dakar became a cloud as it vanished without a trace, and several trails of black smoke remained on the Cape, entering his sights.

As he looked over from the other end of the horizon, there was black grime that remained at a intersection where the sea, sky and earth met. It was smoke that was rising from the burning Dakar—exactly how much damage was caused? Riddhe let the shock from the sea below steady himself, and flew around the coast of the Cape at a speed less than supersonic. In less than 2 minutes, he reached a place where he could witness the devastation for himself. This Universal Century Manhattan obtained massive funding and an amazing amount of prosperity ever since the capital was moved for the second time, and at this point, the place became a large cremation field—the skyscrapers were giving off smoke like charcoal, and the landscape was full of rubble as they formed this scene.

The prevailing winds that blew by the skyscrapers brought the smoke to the sea, and it was impossible to tell where the fires were. The scattered dust was spread all over the plateau area, and the vestiges of destruction that lasted from the harbor to the city center were indistinguishable. The razed rubble and beastly trails were 100m in diameter and 2km in length, and they looked like trails of tractors moving down the corn fields. The tumbled buildings were crushed over each other, and the mobile suits that were exploded and ripped apart could be seen all over the place.

The scenes of the brand new capital that he walked down with his father, hand in hand, soon after it was moved here, was no longer to be seen. Riddhe took in air from his nostrils and suppressed the blood surge that was rising up his brain as he continued to let the machine fall further and fly right at the Bel-Air industrial zone. There was a gas complex and a chemical refinery plant on this reclaimed land right in front of him, and he chose a roundabout method to enter the city. *Where’s the enemy mobile armor that caused such damage?* He stared at the gaps between the group of buildings, and the moment he saw a new fireball of explosion from beyond the smoke, the reddish-

brown object that rumbled at the base of the skyscrapers appeared in his eyes.

“Over there…!”

Riddhe’s first impression was that it was larger than he expected. He compared the enemy unit to the buildings, and guessed that it was almost twice the height of the “Delta Plus”, while the maximum length of its claws could match a medium-sized ship. *Are those shining around it the reflective bits mentioned in the report?* He stared at the floating objects that would change how they glowed according to the angle, and wanted to use the expanded window to catch sight of them. at that moment, a chilling feeling caused him to pull his control stick.

Riddhe sensed that the mobile armor that had its back facing him was twitching slightly, moving its monoeye viciously. The moment after he let the Base Jabber rise up in height, the mobile armor let out a glow, and a deep bellowing sound that was like thunder raced past the ankles of the mobile suit in the air. The veil of dust was blown apart, and the cackling flash surrounded the gas complex below his eyes. Immediately, there was a burst of red flames as the liquefied gas tank was immediately blasted, but he did not see the outcome. The machine took the impact from the shockwaves as it endured the hot air that blew from the front, and Riddhe let the machine rush into the huge wall of fire that expanded in front of him. He heard the rumbling sounds of the hellish fire, and before he could experience any goosebumps, he let the “Delta Plus” move away from the Base Jabber.

The “Delta Plus” became a free-falling object for just a moment before it transformed into a waverider that passed through the black smoke and rose up. The mobile armor let out a beam, crushing the unmanned Base Jabber into dust. The explosion created a chain reaction; Riddhe let the waverider turn towards the city center while the gas complex that was in a sea of fire and smoke as a cover, before the machine rushed through the skyscraper.

The “Delta Plus” that transformed into a waverider was not as fast as the Base Jabber. Riddhe used the road two blocks away from the mobile armor, used the buildings as a cover, and let the machine glide through the place with a low altitude of 30m. The vehicles on the road were blown aside by the shockwaves, and the glass of the buildings on both sides of the road was shattered, none of which were left behind. Riddhe let the “Delta Plus” move 500m away from the mobile armor before transforming it into the mobile suit form to land on the ground. The machine took the effects of the acceleration as its feet were sunk deep into the asphalt, and it glided for another 200m before it finally

stopped.

The silhouette of the mobile armor raising its large claws could be seen on the other side of the buildings that were intertwined. The “Delta Plus” wielding the beam rifle kept its posture down as it continued to dash through the buildings, and then lean its back on a department store facing the intersection point. The large buildings collapsed onto the roads, and it would take less than 30 seconds for the enemy to close in onto the roads before the 2 blocks. If he fired from extremely close range, the bits would probably be unable to respond in time. The “Delta Plus” poked its head out from the back of the building like it was peeking out to look at the surroundings, and Riddhe spotted the silhouette rumbling on the department store wonders. The two figures, probably an old man in charge of cleaning the department store and a lady, looked like they were utterly terrified of the 20m tall giant as they backed away.

There’s still some who’re unable to run away in time? Riddhe could not understand what he saw immediately as he stared at the faces of the two people on the expanded window. A loud boom from a fired beam rang nearby, causing Riddhe to look forward in surprise. There was a “GM III” that crashed into the opposite building and retreated backwards, firing the beam rifle in its hands wildly as it fell down on its backside. That “GM III” saw the head of the large mobile armor swing down the large claws at the intersection point in front of the two blocks, and fired the missiles from the launchers docked on its shoulders.

Riddhe was unable to stop the other party in time. The missiles that were fired without careful aim hit the buildings along the streets directly, causing the exploding flames to rise up continuously. He saw one of the missiles fly through the glass window of the department store and explode deep inside the building. The wind pressure and shockwave that came from within blew the outer wall of several levels, and he could clearly see the old man and the woman caught within the exploded rubble.

The “GM III” continued to fire its beam rifle wildly at the road covered with dust and smoke. Riddhe grabbed the arm of the mobile and pulled it to the blind spot of the collapsed department store. (Khairul was killed…!) as the pilot continued to ramble on, “WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?” Riddhe used the communication channel to yell out at him,

“Why are you using missiles at such a place!? There’re still people in the city!)

(But we can’t let that guy approach the parliament hall…)

“For the sake of your pride, you…!”

Before Riddhe could finish his lashing, he again felt a bone-chilling intent on his back. He instinctively stepped on the pedal, and at that moment, something that looked like a shining mirror appeared in the blind spot of the department store, and the light of an electrical discharge immediately filled his eyes.

The reflective bits took the beams fired by the mobile armor and deflected the mega-particle shot into the cockpit of the “GM III”. Despite having left the scene just a moment before, the “Delta Plus” still could not dodge the shockwave caused by the explosion of the “GM III” completely, and the machine was knocked into the outside signboard of the building before collapsing onto the floor. Riddhe was barely able to maintain his consciousness due to the protection of the linear seat’s shock absorbers, and he immediately used the vernier thrusters to get the “Delta Plus” up. After that, the building beside it scattered in an explosive manner, and the large claws of the mobile armor approached its head like it was covering the roof.

It was simply impossible to believe that something of that massive size had such agility and quick vision. The head of the mobile armor appeared on the other side of the collapsed building, its monoeye glowing through the smoke. Riddhe screamed and tried his best to light the main thrusters. The “Delta Plus” was able to fly up due to the power boost from its legs, and once it dodged the attack of the claws, it transformed into the waverider. The large claws that missed crushed the ground, and the scattered fragements embedded themselves into the bottom of the waverider as it escaped.

“Don’t joke around…!”

Riddhe dodged the mega-particle cannon that could let out a salvo, and as he let the machine turn, there was a physical shot that came from another place, hitting the mobile armor. The “Guntank II” squad, comprised of machines with complete semblance of tanks on their lower bodies and humanoid-looking upper bodies, started to launch cannon strikes in the direction of the parliament hall. The 120mm low recoil cannons that was equipped on both shoulders let out a flash of fire, and the cannons that came from many directions caused the mobile armor to be lit with shots. The bits that surrounded the mobile armor glowed together, and the beams that came flying from all directions burned the surrounding buildings and pierced through the “Guntank IIs”. It was just explosions, scattering and falling happening, and tragic wails could be heard as the people, who were scampering around and could not escape in time, were eradicated by the

collapsing rubble and flames the next moment. No matter the age or gender, all forms of flesh that were human in shape were immediately turned into scraps of flesh.

“There’s no reason for them to die because of such a thing…!”

If this is a tragedy caused by the “Box”. Riddhe let the machine transform, duck low, charge forward and squeezed the trigger of the beam rifle to its maximum. The beams that were deflected by the bits ripped apart the dust, grazing past the head of the “Delta Plus”. The machine then stood on the road in front of several blocks and started firing again. “Get over here!!!” he did not care that the reflected beams grazed past his shields as he let the “Delta Plus” leap up again.

“I won’t let you kill anyone else. Just make me the only victim of the “Box”…!”

The beam rifle continued to let out shots, and the beams that were reflected back in less than a second shook the machine. Riddhe continued to launch his attacks fervently as he forced the machine to retreat back to the coast. *Anyway, I have to let the mobile armor retreat to the city and buy time for the civilians to evacuate. How long can I last?* His mind that was thinking about this could not work at all, and the “Delta Plus” continued to shoot in a suicidal manner as it danced around the skies above Dakar.

08:40[edit]

The Federation mobile suit continued to launch suppressing fire in despair as it intended to lure the “Shamblo” away, probably to let the civilians evacuation. Banagher could tell that it was the new model mobile suit he met during the battle of “Palau”, Ensign Riddhe’s “Delta Plus”.

Is this the same model, or is Ensign Riddhe the one fighting? as he stared at the visual that was filled with noise, *This isn’t the time for me to stand by and watch* Banagher made the conclusion and turned to leave the bridge of the “Garencieres”. But just before he could press the open switch of the automatic door, “Where are you going?” Zinnerman asked, and Banagher felt his heating body shudder and respond.

“I’m going to sortie in the “Unicorn”. There’s no reason for such a situation to continue if I can just unseal the Laplace Program, right?”

He kept his voice down as he avoided facing the other man. If he had seen the other man’s face, Banagher would probably start lashing out. He intended to pass through the door directly, “No you can’t”, but after

hearing the stiff response, he stopped in his tracks again.

“You’ll be shot down if you launch now. Wait till the cleaning is complete.”

“Cleaning…there’re people who’re unrelated to this dying out there!? These are hundreds we’re talking about here! Do you feel that’s right!?”

“This is the strategy. There’s no such thing as right or wrong.”

Zinnerman did not look away as he said this with conviction. Banagher was overwhelmed by the powerful stare in front of him as he thought for a moment, *Is this really the case?*. He exchanged looks with Flaste, who too glanced back, and though Flaste wanted to give Zinnerman a grudging look, he could only look forward in a futile manner.

These people knew that such a thing will happen. This is too weird. This is wrong. Banagher shook off Zinnerman’s sharp stare and decided to head through the door this time. However—

“Don’t go.”

An icy feeling passed through Banagher’s back as a voice of refusal rang. He looked back and saw Zinnerman’s still-unwavering eyes and the muzzle of the handgun he was holding in his hand.

“Captain…” Alec muttered as he got up from the steering seat. Flaste merely looked over from the back of the chair, not showing any signs of intervention. Banagher was frozen by the muzzle pointing at him as he felt the strength seeping out from below his belly, and he murmured, “Are you serious…?” Zinnerman answered back in silence, the automatic handgun in his hand remaining unmoved.

He could sense a completely incompatible sense of fortitude from Zinnerman’s eyes, just like what he felt from Madhi. That fortitude became wind pressure that swayed Banagher’s body. The sad eyes he saw in the desert and Dakar, the eyes that were filled with hollows that pitch dark like an abyss; Banagher did not consider which true feelings the other man had were. He looked back at those black eyes, reaffirming that those were two aspects Zinnerman had. A new explosion appeared on the monitor again, and a white flash scorching the city gradually expanded—

08:44[edit]

The industrial zone in the sea of fire let out a thicker veil of smoke, the collapsed hotel debris was covered by smoke, and at that moment, Nigel Garrett sensed danger rising up from his feet.

“It’s coming…”

The “Jesta” unit 7 looked down at the sea surface flowing below and raised its beam rifle to get ready. The driver piloting the float ferrying the “Jesta” on the water surface did not sense the pressure coming from below the sea, merely thinking off getting by this sea surface that was smothering with smoke and onto the coast of Dakar. *If I get distracted by this guy with such a normal response, I won’t be able to sense what I can sense.* Nigel looked back through the all-view monitor, and looked at Daryl and Watt’s units that were following behind. He saw that their “Jestas” were being tense as they laid prone on the floats, putting the beam rifles at a position where they could fire immediately, and affirmed that his sense was not wrong.

There were six LCAC transports the Dakar security sent. After launching 10km off the coast of Dakar from the “Ra Cailum”, Solton’s squadron rode on the LCAC that were on standby above the sea, and took two different routes to approach the coastline. The team led by Solton landed on the north side of the industrial zone, while the Tri-Stars led by Nigel moved inland through the southern Bernard cape. They deliberately avoided reaching the harbor directly as they were wary of the enemy forces hidden within the harbor, which would intercept them. However, they would not have to work so hard just to make a detour if they could escape just like that. The enemy had already sensed that that they were approaching, and they were waiting in ambush underwater. The water depth was 40m deep, and this would be the most probably place the enemy would launch their attacks.

“Daryl, Watts! That’s it for our boat ride. Air transit!”

On hearing their leader declare this without warning, (Roger that!), both men answered back as their voices rang through the wireless communicator. (What are you planning to do!?) Nigel heard the LCAC driver yell out. “Line up with the friendly units. Scatter immediately after we leave.” After he said that, he let the machine get up.

The LCACs that were practically rectangles lined up about 100m away from each other. The “Jestas” kneeling on the platform were holding onto their beam rifles with both hands, and let the personalized shield resting on their backs to appear on the side of their left arms. Nigel stared at the 1km stretch of sea beyond him and let his sense expand around to grasp the sense of pressure at his feet. The incoherent pressure that was dissolved into the sea gathered at one point and started to let out a sense of killing intent. *It feels like there’s an icy cold knife object on my back. This is—!*

“Let’s go!”

Nigel yelled and stepped on the pedal. The thrusters on the back and calves lit up together, and the three “Jestas” leapt from the LCACs at that same time. These LCACs that were ferrying lumbering tanks in the old ages would not topple because the mobiles suits leaped off like this. Nigel was boosted by the high-output of the thrusters as he leapt 300m into the air, and he saw a black shadow gradually floated up from below the LCAC.

The Neo Zeon amphibious mobile suit did not expect them to rise up, and hesitated just when they were about to attack the LCACs. Daryl and Watts leapt up, and as they crossed over at Nigel unit’s feet, they raised their rifles at the same time and fired at the black shadows. The mega-particle shots that passed into the sea surface caused the seawater to rise up, and the enemy with two jet units on its back could be seen on the sea that parted. Nigel immediately aimed the reticule at the target.

“Over there…”

The transmitter trigger moved along with the index finger of the “Jesta”, and the rifle let out a beam. A light was shot down from above, piercing through the cylindrical jet units on the back and the abdomen of the enemy unit hidden in the sea. The flash that immediately expanded caused the mud on the seabed to be scattered, and the shockwaves that became supersonic caused the water on the sea surface to vaporize. The seawater rose due to the explosion, and as the large water pillars stood on the sea, a deep sound reverberated through the air and immediately spread towards the coast of Dakar.

We got rid of one here. Nigel piloted the machine that became a free-falling object and landed softly on the LCAC. He turned his back at the raging pillar of water as he examined the coast. Daryl and Watts units were crossing through in the air, and before they landed on each other’s LCAC, Nigel had already seen a water bubble at a corner of the coast. The enemy amphibious mobile suit looked like a fisherman landing on the shore as it was dripping water, facing the water. The next instant, it lit its thrusters, and the machine started to climb up the cliff facing the water.

The enemy mobile suit leaped up as it abandoned the ballast tanks on its abdomen, and folded the claws on its arms. This alone caused the short and stout silhouette to change. It resembled a Zaku-type humanoid machine, removed the waterproof case on its shoulders, and drew its beam machine gun. The large mega-particle bullets rained down from the cliff, causing the LCAC to be surrounded by several thin water pillars. “Don’t stop! Get up there immediately!” Nigel

yelled as he fired a suppressing shot of beam before jumping onto the coastline.

The machine landed on the shallow beach that was 5m deep in water near the Bellard cape that had a natural view, and fired its beam rifle again. The enemy unit used the cliff that was approximately 30m tall as a shield, squeezed the trigger to fire back, and hid behind the cliff. The LCACs ferrying Daryl and Watts used this opening to land, and the bottoms of air cushions rolled up the shore. “We won’t be able to use the LCACs from here on. Everyone scatter.” Nigel instructed as his “Jesta” continued to trample on the sand of the shore and approach the cliff.

Daryl and Watts’ units got off the LCAC and aimed at the cliff as they scattered sideways. *How many of the enemy units are still in ambush? Has Solton’s squadron landed safely?* The radar could not work at all due to the Minovsky particles, and Nigel stared at the rising smoke on the other side of the cliff as he gave hand signals to Daryl and Watts’ units that were hidden in the blind spots. The “Jesta” pointed its left finger at Daryl’s unit, and then pointed at its main camera again. Once Daryl received the instruction to scout and started to take action, Nigel put the stock of the beam rifle on the “Jesta” shoulder tightly.

“You better hang in there, Lord Ensign…”

Nigel muttered as an inspiration as he let the machine crouch low and move. The sounds of the battle going on in the city caused the air to let out tremors interruptedly, preventing anyone from hearing the sound of the tide.

08:46[edit]

The intangible killing intent floating in the air would sometimes form a breeze. That would be the premonition of an enemy’s attack. Loni closed her eyes and gathered her concentration on the “wind” that blew, and imagined herself reaching her hand at the direction of where the wind came from.

The psycommu picked up the imagination in Loni’s mind as it reacted with the reflective bits, prompting a defensive net to be cast on the left side of the “Shamblo”. The reflected light pierced through the roof of the buildings, chasing the enemy mobile suit that transformed into a fighter jet to dodge. *This person is different from the rest.* Loni muttered subconsciously as she bit her lips. The other enemy units were just attacking without a plan, but this transformable mobile suit was radiating a clear pressure. It was planning to lure them away, and the embodiment of this strong will formed a strong wind that blew into

Loni's skull.

She opened her eyes and saw the opposing machine on the main screen. She stared at the lean humanoid profile that transformed into a mobile suit again, moving into the blind spots between the buildings, identified the civilians gathered at the cross junction, and gasped. It had been almost 2 hours since they landed, but she did not discover any organized retreat in the first place. The civilians that were evacuated were forced by the overly messy actions of the Federation mobile suits, and could run about helter-skelter. They, who were running to different directions, ended up meeting at the intersection while escaping and crowded around. The police officers holding loudhailers tried to stop them, but there was no effect at all.

That transformable mobile suit was fighting on its own to protect the evacuating civilians. It was firing meaningless merely to change the course of the "Shamblo". Loni felt a pain that reached her mind as she understood this, and put her hand on her helmet. She discovered a school bus that was unable to move amongst the vehicles. It was the same as the one she saw in front of the parliament hall, and the crying girl who fell down was on it—

"Father."

Loni shook her head that was starting to hurt more and more as she turned her eyes behind. "There're too many civilians evacuating in front of us. Let's head to the coast and attack from the East side. That transformable mobile suit pestering us will quiet down after that.

"No. The "Shamblo"s energy isn't infinite. We don't have the leisure of detouring around."

Mahdi sat on the captain's seat as he continued to stare at the screen, not budging at all. *Then, why did you carelessly use up energy to fire the main cannon at the hotel?* "However…!" Loni raised her pitch, but once she met her father's unexpectedly calm eyes, she swallowed the latter half of the words she wanted to say.

"Loni, we've detoured for far too long. We have to choose the shortest route from how. This will help to become an example for those rebels who plan to follow our path in the future."

As Mahdi said this, "There're tanks coming from the front", he heard Walid report, and immediately changed expressions again, and looked like he did not remember anything he had said as he turned to focus on the screen. "Destroy them", his expression immediately twisted, and the "Shamblo" lifting its long narrow neck reverbed through the cockpit

block. Loni felt the rhythm full of madness on her back, and inadvertently thought of getting up. “Loni, focus on defense.” However, Abbas said this, causing her to gasp.

“Father’s right. If we continue to take physical hits, even the “Shamblo” won’t be able to hang on.”

There’s no way back now. She saw her oldest brother state this silently in his eyes, saw the two “Guntank IIs” that were closing in from the other side of the intersection path, and could only return back to her seat reluctantly. The cannons on the shoulders were giving off little sparkles, and the “Guntank IIs” fired the smoothbore shots. Loni closed her eyes to let her consciousness merge with the psycommu installation. The reflective bits appeared in front of the body, and the fired mega particle shot was deflected. The massive body of the “Shamblo” was then covered with a tremendous flash from the arrays of beams.

The smoothbore shot that touched the screen scattered, and black smoke rained on the array of light that cackled. The ionized air deflected the air, bounced off the surrounding rubble, and knocked aside the school bus that remained stuck on the road. The body of the bus looked like it was kicked high up by a giant as it slammed into the ranks of civilians, and as Loni stared at this scene from the corner of her eyes, she peremptorily closed her eyes. That transformable mobile suit fired its suppressing shots laterally. *What are you doing!? How many people must you kill before you’re satisfied?* the firm anger became a “wind” that struck Loni, causing her hurting head to be burdened further.

What am I doing? this thought rose within her consciousness, causing the psycowaves to deviate slightly. However, the bits that learned how to deploy themselves did not slow down. The lights from the deflected beams were excoriating her through her eyelids, and she was struggling in the midst of the system.

08.47[edit]

“…I do not remember tying you and bringing you up here. Logically, you could have chosen not to wear that pilot suit. The reason why you thought that this shouldn’t happen is because you lack imagination.”

The “Shamblo” was flashing on the monitor in the background, and Zinnerman said this as he turned his back on it, the gun and his stare remaining unmoved. Those were the eyes of someone who had killed someone before, the same eyes he had when they first met—stone black emotionless eyes that were devoid of expression. He felt that it

was a lame argument, and as he was about to trip over, he eked out words from his trembling voice, “Did you predict this before it happened, captain?” Zinnerman answered, “That’s what it means to suppress the city.” His voice echoed through the cramped bridge of the “Garencieres”.

“Is suppressing just to attack unnecessary places and trample on those escaping!? This can’t even be considered a war! It’s just a venting of hatred…!”

The black eyes that were reminiscent of black Go stones shuddered slightly, and the mouth that was covered by the thick and hard beard showed signs of being speechless. Banagher recalled, *That’s right. This man never squeezed the trigger when he first pointed the gun at me. He just said “Leave the kid alone” and didn’t do anything else before he left.*

The other man was not someone who could not empathize with him. His heart was wailing too. “Captain, please tell them to stop.” Banagher pressed on as he took one step closer to Zinnerman.

“You too know that man, Mahdi, he’s not normal. If this keeps up, Dakar will really be destroyed completely.”

Banagher stared at his wavering eyes , and took another step to close his distance with the gun. Zinnerman sat on the captain’s seat, not budging at all.

“You should be able to see the world more clearly than someone like him, right? If you want to say that this is war, why did you bring me to the desert? Why do you want to save Miss Marida? She’s calling you master not because she’s a Cyber-Newtype, captain. Her soul was saved by you, just like me, so that’s why she—”

“SHUT UP!”

A blunt impact hit Banagher on the face, and his body flew out and slammed into the wall. Banagher could not fall as the bridge was too cramped, and as he ended up sitting on his backside, he saw Zinnerman standing furiously, away from the focus of his vision.

“Don’t talk as if you know everything. I was concerned about you because you’re the key to getting the “Box”. Besides, it’ll be more convenient for the future if I pull you here.”

The voice of the words the other man said echoed in Banagher’s brain that rang endlessly. *You’re lying.* Just when Banagher was about to let out this voice, it melted within his mouth, and he turned to look at

Flaste on the navigation seat. Flaste sensed some awkwardness as their eyes met, and did not say anything as he looked in front again.

“You just said that this isn’t war, huh? Open your eyes and look carefully. This is what happens during a war. There’s no philosophy, no reputations, no pride. All it has are people killing others and people being killed.”

Zinnerman grabbed the collar of the pilot suit as he forcefully pulled Banagher up and slammed him onto the console. Banagher put his hands on the monitor, saw the black flames swirling in the air, and could not help but look away.

“It’s considered a good thing to kill off someone immediately like that. There are people who died in more cruel ways, who were tortured when they were alive, until their deaths. What’s wrong about unleashing our rage? Our war hasn’t ended in the first place.”

“This reasoning…is no different from the Federation army that razed the Zeon towns!”

Zinnerman stumbled in his words, but Banagher did not have the time to observe the other man’s expression. Another flying punch flew right at his face, and he ended up falling on his backside for a second time. His slightly concussed brain was ringing, and a strand of snot dripped onto this floor. This seemingly became an opportunity as he felt the heat sensation in his body fading off, and his lower body that wanted to stand up lost its strength. Banagher did not even have to look at Zinnerman, who stood dumbfounded, and the blood droplets that were mixed with saliva dripped down his lowered face.

He lacked imagination, and he had no answer to that. There would be deaths when suppressing. He lacked this sense of surreal in his heart, but he managed to make it all the way to this point—*No, that’s not it. 100 people dying is too many, but it can’t be helped if 10 people dies.* Banagher had this thought somewhere in his heart, and allowed himself to be part of the situation. *This is to identify the true identity of the “Box”, this is to fulfill the responsibility I have to do;* he was ready to say these words in his heart, but he ended up viewing things from his own perspective, and took action as a result.

However, Zinnerman was different. He knew right from the beginning that it would end up like this. He joined this operation under this premise, and at this point, he still wanted to fulfill the role he was assigned. Even if the operation was overboard in some aspects, it was the responsibility of the Neo Zeon higher ups, who accept the proposal from Mahdi, and he had no need to be criticized. The military was an

organization that ran in such a way, and Zinnerman was a soldier right down to the core. Banagher understood that he saved the “Unicorn” and showed concern to him as part of his job. The fatherly affections he had for Marida was also to use her as a fighting strength. He endured hardships in a fallen military organization, harboring his hatred for the Federation in his heart. If there was a need, this man, who should not be underestimated, would become cold and cruel—but if that was the case, why was he so agitated? Why were his eyes, his words stabbing into his chest, and hurting him so painfully?

He kept saying that it was the truth, but in fact, he could not agree to it either. He stated those words that were not his true intent as his real thoughts, and kept torturing himself inside. He had to bear the responsibility as a soldier and the responsibility to take care of the “Garencieres” crew. If he did not bear them, he could not do anything, but once he bore the responsibilities on his soldiers, he would attach thoughts that did not match his heart onto himself, and would even have to kill off the voice inside him. He knew that this was a sad thing about humans. He could not feel comfortable with his heart that could not kill off the last glimmer within him—

“Those who are sad…live on with their lives to abandon that sadness…Those who can truly say such words in their hearts have the right to punch others. I’m willing to be punched by that kind of person.”

Banagher himself did not understand what was going on as his words came out from his mouth. He wiped away the trail of blood on his lips as he looked up at Zinnerman, who twitched his eyebrows.

Cardeas, Marida, Daguza and everyone on the “Nahel Argama” were the same. They were restrained by their past, limited by their organizations, but those people chose to leave their own wills as a mark thoroughly. It was because he accepted their support that he could remain here. As he supported himself off the wall, he let his staggering body stand up, clench his fists, stared at the other man, and said, “You don’t have the right to do that now.”

“If you want to punch someone, GO PUNCH YOURSELF!”

As he yelled out loud, Banagher used the momentum to swing his right fist. Zinnerman immediately dodged this attack, but his hulking body hit the console at the back, and as he looked like he was going to trip, Banagher immediately went forward to swing his left fist. The bearded face was immediately hit with an uppercut, “You brat…!” and Zinnerman growled as he swung the handgun grip down. However, Banagher used this opening to get into Zinnerman’s clutches and slammed his head into the other man’s belly with all his strength.

Zinnerman grunted as he dropped the gun from his hand and fell onto the floor on his backside, probably because he was hit in the solar plexus. Banagher immediately got onto the other man and started swinging his hurting fists onto the bearded face that was restrained on the floor.

“You’re just lying to yourself, as if you knew everything…! You understood very well that this is just a blatant massacre of innocents! It can’t make up for anything…!”

After taking 3 punches, Zinnerman was bleeding from his mouth as he suddenly widened his eyes. He grabbed the arm that was about to swing the 4th fist down, and yelled “YOU DON’T KNOW ANYTHING, BRAT!”. The bear-like arm strength easily lifted Banagher, and as Banagher was raised helplessly, Zinnerman used his sole to kick into the his stomach. He was sent flying behind, and the back of his head hit the floor hard.

“You want me to forgive the Federation? What kind of joke is that? Do you know how it’s like for someone who used to have a wife and a child? I can’t even exchange my own life for theirs, let alone the world! They’re unique gemstones in this world, the gemstones who taught me everything about the meaning of being born and living on! Do you know how I felt when they were tortured to death!?

I can’t even lie to myself here! I’m waiting for this moment. And I even want to help out there…!”

“But that’s why…! You can’t drag other people to hell just because you’ve seen hell yourself!!”

Banagher spit out the blood in his mouth as he stamped onto the floor and slammed himself into the other man. “You stubborn brat!” Zinnerman grabbed Banagher by the chest, who was then slammed to the war, but he started kicking at Zinnerman’s vitals wildly. Zinnerman held back from letting out a voiceless scream as his bruised face gradually filled Banagher’s sights. His large body fell backwards, and he was dragged down by Banagher as both of them tripped into the narrow space beside the captain’s seat.

Both of them were grabbing each other by the chest, restraining each other as they twisted and tumbled around on the floor. *Do what you feel you have to do, continue saying “Even so”*. Banagher was driven by the words throbbing inside his body as he wanted to gnash at Zinnerman’s throat. “Flaste! Don’t just watch, hurry up and get this guy off me!” Zinnerman pushed Banagher’s chin away as he growled, and from the corner of his eyes, Banagher could see Alec frantically getting

up from his seat. However—

“Sorry, I’m a little busy right now. Please try and figure out a way yourself.”

Leave them alone. Flaste seemed like he was hinting to this as he said calmly while holding back Alec. “You…!?” Zinnerman growled as he lost his strength in his hands, and Banagher swung aside the hands that were choking him below. He slugged hard at the surprised bearded face with his fists, and got onto the hulking man who tried to sit up again. Zinnerman grabbed the armrest of the captain’s seat, and barely avoided falling backwards. He let out an ambiguous howl and reached his trunk-like thigh at the other person.

Banagher got kicked hard in the stomach as he took a counter, and his body flew 2m away and crashed hard into the wall. He could not breathe and could only open his mouth wide as he fell limp, sitting on the floor limply. Even though he wanted to get up, he could not exert strength in his legs, and his body was aching like his heart. He bent his body down as his shoulders were rising up and down, panting. Zinnerman’s round belly was huffing too, and his swollen face glanced at the ceiling.

The two people’s panting remained in the bridge, and the sound of the engine gradually swallowed it. Alec merely gave a short glance from behind the back of the chair, while Flaste did not bother to look over. Banagher was unable to tell which parts of his body were aching at this point as he stared right at Zinnerman in the airs and used his arms to forcefully support himself off the floor. He endured the sharp pain that was piercing through his skullcap and gradually leaned his back on the wall, “I don’t know…I really don’t know…” and allowed his trembling throat to let out a vague hoarse voice.

“The pain of having a wife and child killed…what’s right, what’s wrong…I don’t know at all…”

He could not argue back “even so”. He did not have the right to talk about others this way as he was unable to really understand others. As he understood this all too clearly, Banagher gritted his teeth and forced his numb knees to stand up. Zinnerman did not wipe away the blood on his lips as he turned his eyes, right under his swollen eyelids, at Banagher.

“However, it’s not right to stop my soul from feeling…just because I don’t know…just because there’re too many sad things.”

This is a one and only cog that can make decisions on its own. Don’t

lose it— We lived on to abandon our sadness. Banagher used these words his heart heard as his pillars of support as his feet stepped onto the floor again.

“I have a heart that can empathize with other people’s sadness, and I don’t want to forget about that. I want to be someone who can take the sadness…just like you, captain.”

Zinnerman widened his eyes, and their eyes met for less than a second. *He might start shooting at me from behind the next moment. Is it good?* Banagher reached for the switch button of the automatic door before he could answer his own question. He held his breath and walked out of the bridge.

He took in the external air that blew into the corridor, opened his eyes that were closed temporarily, exerted strength in his abdomen, and took a step forward. The sound of the automatic door closing rang, the stares on his back were blocked, and the only thing left was the corridor in front of him, dyed in red light. Zinnerman did not use the handgun; If he had minded about that, he could have shot Banagher whenever he could, but he did not do so. Was it because of the key to the “Box”? Banagher endured the questions that rose up his heart, accepted the reality as it happened, clenched his fists and ran out.

The “heat” that was growing from within his body was suppressing the throbbing pain and spread through the entire body. Once he passed through this dim corridor, he would be able to reach the mobile suit deck where the “Unicorn” awaited.

08:50[edit]

The giant claws supported by the flexible mechanical arm were raised and swung down with force. The head of the “GM III” was crushed as it rolled onto the road, and it was crushed to bits by the incoming large claws like scrap metal.

The mobile armor looked like a giant elephant that could trample over humans as it lifted its head, letting out a metallic roar. Another “GM III” ran out from a blind spot of the building, and drew its beam saber as it fired the missiles docked on its shoulders. The missiles hit the array of beams and exploded into fireballs; and the “GM III” leapt up and swung its saber overhead at the mobile armor. However, the reflective bits field would not waver just because of this level of attack.

The machine was caught by the flashing high-heat net, and its limbs were trembling as if they were electrocuted and fell backwards. The “GM III” knocked away the vehicles abandoned on the road and

grinded away several tens of meters. Riddhe glanced at the friendly unit that was damaged as he fired a beam to restrain. He grabbed the "GM III" by the arm and pulled it into the blind spot of the building. The mobile armor then swung its large claws down, crushing the road the two mobile suits originally were.

(Are the reinforcements from Ivory Coast…?)

The voice of the "GM III' pilot rang through the communication channel. "You're wrong here, but reinforcements are reinforcements." Riddhe answered as he let the "GM III" shoulder rest on the shoulder of the "Delta Plus" and picked him up like he was carrying an injured person. As he moved to the street on the next block, the pilot continued with a hazy voice, (You're the only one here? Where're the rest?). The "GM III" tripped on its way and knelt down on the road. "Pull yourself through!" Riddhe angrily chided.

"The landing team will be here immediately. Hurry up and retreat while you can still move."

Riddhe said as he loaded the last energy cap into the beam rifle. From behind the building, he glared at the mobile armor that was whiffing up dust. The Ra Cailum squad still had not contacted Riddhe, perhaps because they were distracted by the aqua mobile suits lying in ambush in the coast. The mobile suits of Dakar's security had mostly retreated, and they were preparing a final defensive line around the parliament hall. At this point, there was no way they could prevent the assault of the mobile armor, and they could not guide the civilians who were unable to run away in time. However, he could not retreat from here and let the enemy hasten. *I can still go on.* Riddhe thought in his heart as he stared at the lights of the alerts indicating malfunctioning conditions all over the machine, let the thoroughly battered "GM III" lean on the building, and raised his beam rifle that had only 8 shots left, and used it to aim.

(The balancer is not working. This machine can't make it…)

The "GM III" reached its arm over to pull the hand of the "Delta Plus", seemingly trying to call out to RIddhe as the pilot's voice rang. For some reason, Riddhe felt a chill in his heart as he looked back at the other machine.

(There's a hospital in front. We can't let that guy move forward…you still have shots in your rifle?)

"Yeah…"

(That's good. I'll try to slide over to that guy's feet. If I can get in, fire at

me.)

Ridddhe sensed that the cracked main camera of the “GM III” had the warmth of a human stare overlapping it. “This…! I can’t—” Riddhe gasped, but that pilot emphasized calmly, (You have to do it.)

(It’ll be great if that explosion can open a hole in that beam screen. Listen. Don’t hit the generator directly.)

Once he gave this instruction, the “GM III” that was standing with the support of the “Delta Plus” stepped onto the street, but it was obviously staggering. “Wait…!” Riddhe yelled, but the pilot did not care as the “GM III” lit the thrusters on its backpacker and charged headfirst like a bullet

(Joule…listen to your mother’s words…!)

The pilot’s shout rang in the midst of the noise, and the beam sabers it drew on both its hands let out beam particles. The mobile armor that arrived at the intersection point turned its monoeye savagely, and spotted the “GM III” that was charging right at it. The reflective bits that quickly formed a defensive array let out a reflection of beams.

The right arm of the “GM III” was blown away with the beam saber, and the left arm equipped with the shield was gradually ripped from its shoulder. But even so, the “GM III” continued to charge in and rush at the array of beams, and the almost charred machine ducked beside the feet of the mobile armor. The severity of the damage was such that the wireless communicator was filled with more noise than before, and the signal was suddnely cut. The mobile armor skipped trampled the stiff frozen “GM III” and continued to proceed forward as if nothing happened. Having witnessed this scene right in front of him, Riddhe’s fingers that were on the rifle trigger were trembling.

“You bastard!”

He again ended up witnessing someone dying again, and after shaking aside the hesitation with the voice he managed to squeeze out from his stomach, he squeezed the trigger. The mega particle shot came surging from the “Delta Plus” beam rifle, hitting the side of the mobile armor’s as the barrier could not make it in time. The beam that should have hit the “GM III” directly and cause an explosion that should scatter the array of bits was deflected by the large claws right before it hit, becoming scattered particles

An anti-beam coating. That object had not only reflective bits to reflect the beams, but also an anti-beam coating that could negate mega-particles. Its defense for its blind spots could be said to be completely

perfect. As this sense of despair passed through Riddhe's back, the large claws came swinging down at lightning speed, filling the sights of the all-view monitor.

The machine that was intending to retreat floated up from the ground, and a tremendous lateral G-force struck the cockpit. The wall of a building came falling onto him at a startling speed, and right when he could not help but close his eyes, an explosive impact and boom surrounded the "Delta Plus".

The machine that was trapped by the mobile armor's claws ended up thrown into the buildings on the street. A dust cloud then appeared from the shattered building, and the machine that was picked up together with the rubble was slammed into the building on the opposite end. The arms supporting the linear seat swayed and cackled, and Riddhe's head was buried into the air bags ejected from the display board. However, just before he could support his body, a new impact lunged at him. The mobile armor pulled the "Delta Plus" from underneath the rubble, raised the claws holding the suit above its hair, and slammed it to the ground with the help of gravity.

Riddhe immediately lit the thrusters on the back, but it did not manage to decelerate significantly. The back of the "Delta Plus" was slammed hard onto the road, and the machine was half buried in the cracked asphalt. The large claws grabbed the lower half of the machine to restrain it, while the other claw rose slowly over the head of the "Delta Plus", showing its malice that it was trying to dice it up as it opened its sharp blades. Riddhe sensed that his body was going to be crushed by this impact and scattered apart as he gritted his bloodied teeth.

Is this the end? I can't do anything, I'll die here without being able to save anyone. As Riddhe's concussed mind eked out these thoughts, *How annoying,* he muttered in his heart that felt everything was unrealistic. Dok, a familiar brainwave entered his mind, and he sensed that his body was shaking in resonanace.

Dok, dok. The brainwaves that were released entered his forehead, and the skin that was covered by the pilot suit gradually stood on its hairs. Those waves were resonating with his heartbeat, with time and space—Riddhe looked past the large claws of the mobile armor and saw a bright glow from the other end of the dust. The source of light that was high up in the sky seemed to be slowing down, and the light and waves were gradually strengthening.

That guy's coming. Riddhe instincts were connected with the visual, numbing his body that was restrained on the road. He did not look at the face of the dead god right in front of his eyes as he stared at a spot

in the sky that was dyed brown by the rising smoke.

08:53[edit]

The hatch on the starboard was opened completely, and once the steam that was caused by the air pressure difference rushed all, the all-view monitor was covered with a thin layer of fog from top to bottom. From the clouds, he could see the ground 7,000m below, and the streets of Dakar were giving off ink-like black smoke.

Even from this point, he could still see the trails that indicated that the “Shamblo” passed by. He saw the pitch black trail of destruction that followed the grey city, and gulped his saliva before grabbing onto the control stick he felt familiar with. The belly of the “Garencieres” flying horizontally dropped down, and once the restrains of the hanger were released, the “Unicorn” would fall down like a bomb. The air flow that was surging from the cockpit hatch rumbled, and the mechanic Tomura yelled with a voice no softer than it, (Are you really going to do that!?)

(There’s still a battle going on! You’ll definitely be shot down if you go down now!)

(It doesn’t matter. Whatever the brat wants…right, captain?)

Flaste said while imitating Zinnerman’s tone. The visual network was not connected, but Banagher could tell that he was laughing dryly. He too curled his lips up, but his face immediately gave off a sharp pain, and he applied some anti-inflammatory spray on his face again. As he endured the pain on his face and blinked, Tomura’s voice rang (That’s what the higher-ups said. Are you alright, Banagher?)

“Yeah. Mr Tomura, everyone on the “Garencieres”…and the captain. Thank you for taking care of me.”

No one responded, but Banagher felt that this was fine as he closed his visor helmet. *There’s no need for any more words. I’ve already accepted what I should accept in my heart.* (What’s with that tone there!? Stop saying such ominous things!!) Banagher ignored Tomura’s doubtful voice as he looked at the streets right below his eyes, and then reported that he was going to leave the ship through the wireless communicator, which Zinnerman was probably listening to.

“Banagher Links, “Unicorn Gundam”, launching!”

The restrains holding down the limbs were removed, and the “Unicorn” was ejected from the “Garencieres” as it left. The white machine

passed through the clouds, and as it became a free-falling object that ripped through the air, the G-force that struck heavily forced Banagher down onto the linear seat. The height meter value drop continuously, and the details of Dakar shrouded in black smoke were gradually becoming clearer.

There were dust filling the air, crushed buildings everywhere, and wreckages of debris scattered all around. The piled up rubble were giving off heat, and there should be countless corpses buried underneath. The people who had never dreamt that they would die on this day originally had their own plans, and at this point, they became rubble of intellect and blood—the swirling black smoke was rising from there, and to Banagher's eyes, it looked like it ha da consciousness. There were two different auras coming out in equal parts, a side doing the killing and a side being killed, forming a chilling layer that engulfed the "Unicorn" in it, seemingly showing the resentment of the people who did not die in peace.

Dok. Such a pulsation resonated, and Banagher felt the "heat" in his body awakening. It was the pulsation of the "Unicorn"…no, it was the pulse of the machine that accepted the heart of the pilot and amplified it mechanically. *To anger, to hate, to beat the enemy; those are the emotions rising within me. The machine wants to use my heart as the core of its explosion; it's making a pulsating feeling that wants to control me with the system…!*

"That's right, I should be angry. This is too unreasonable."

Banagher subconsciously said this as he licked his bloodied lips. Dok, the pulsating rang as the "Unicorn" responded.

"You're built for this. You have to fight in the face of unreasonable things. But don't get devoured by anger."

The burning sensation seemed to respond to Banagher's thoughts, and the burning sensation that was swirling in the stomach started to shake. *I can't let this emotionally-driven heat, this heat born out of a yearning heart, I can't let it extinguish. However, I can't let myself get devoured by it. I can't let it fade, I can't let myself drown in it, I have to let it become part of my body. If this is something born within my body, there's no reason why I can't pilot it. My heart has a path that heads down the path between light and darkness—*

"I'm not the key to the "Box", I'm a living person. I'm fighting against something unreasonable too, I'm someone who hopes to drive possibilities forward, and you're the machine that's in charge of amplifying the power for that kind of person.

If you understand a human's heart, you can empathize with the sadness inside my heart. "Gundam"! Lend me your power…!"

Dok, Dok, dok. The pulsating accelerated, and the display board that was dyed red showed the NT-D sign. Banagher felt a sharp pain in his nose, and his heart that was beating with it started to increase in rate. He closed his eyes, imagined a large wave coming right at him, and once he opened his eyes, he removed his hand from the control sticks.

The dual-eyed sensor looked like it was responding to the eyelids that opened as it slid open from below the face mask. At the same time, the full psycoframe glowed as it expanded, and the lone horn on its forehead gradually formed a V-sign. The "Unicorn" opened its shield to withstand the air flow, let its freefalling frame turn around, and "transformed" through its own will as it extended its limbs in the sky. The phosphorous psycoframe lights outlined the "Gundam" in the middle of Dakar's sky.

The restrains on the headrest held down the helmet, and the drugs used to weaken the anti-G forces were injected into the body. He felt like he was dipped in some thick fluid, and a second felt like it was extended to ten. As he felt his heartbeat slow down, Banagher told himself, *It's alright, I can hang on.* He looked at the height meter that dropped past 2,000m, and then stared at the landscape that was closing in rapidly. He had already grasped the location of the "Shamblo" and the situation of the "Delta Plus" caught within. He could clearly interpret the trajectory in which his machine would fall down from the atmosphere.

He held onto the control stick and transferred the necessary imagination he needed to the intention automatic system. The psycommu and psycoframe picked up the signals as they moved together, and the machine flipped in the air as it whipped out the beam Gatling gun. The two 4-barreled Gatling guns let out large beam pellets before Banagher could even squeeze the trigger, and the hot torrent of light rained down on the "Shamblo".

The "Shamblo" could not evade the screen of beams in time as it twisted in agony, and there was a white machine letting out a red phosphorous trail as it flew above it. *The "Unicorn Gundam" leash is definitely in my hands.* Banagher decuded calmly as he continued to squeeze the imaginary trigger. The large body of the "Shamblo" let out a tremendous flash as it was covered by numerous bullets of light, looking somewhat scared.

08:54[edit]

The mega particle shot that passed through the reflective bits grazed the armor, and the cockpit block was shaken intensely for the first time. The light filter could not block the intensity completely as this flash filled the screen completely, and this overly dazzling light caused Loni to look away inadvertently. She heard Walid say with a screaming like voice, “It’s the “breaking horn”!”

“It’s too early for the “breaking horn” to mobilize! No, why is it attacking u!?”

The “Shamblo” felt Mahdi’s wavering as tilted forward. The large claws left the ground, and the transformable mobile suit broke free from its restrains and left the scene. An attacking consciousness was formed as it fired a beam—Loni realized that she did not have the time to detect this “wind” that was formed, and as she witnessed the transformable mobile suit leave, she focused on the new enemy that was approaching from the sky above. She had no time to digest the meaning of the term “braking horn” as she tried to focus on operating the psycommu controls, “Mahdi Garvey!” but an angry yell caused her to widen her eyes.

(The seal of the “Box” will be opened immediately. It’s pointless to keep fighting, so make everyone retreat!)

She recognized this voice. The name of a boy called Banagher Links appeared in Loni’s mind, and she looked back at the captain’s seat behind her. “The “Gundam” with the “breaking horn”…is the key of the “Box” talking here? Mahdi murmured as his face was gradually filled with anger.

“Then why are you getting in our way? Did Zinnerman give that instruction!?”

(This isn’t anyone’s instruction. I said that it’s meaningless to fight on. If you don’t retreat, I’m going to use the power of the “Gundam” to prevent you from invading further!)

The voice of the boy was significantly different from back then as it rang, and at the same time, the white machine descended in front of the “Shamblo”. It whipped out the two beam Gatling guns equipped on its left arm, just like what it declared, showing a will to become a wall. That was definitely the “Gundam” she saw on the news footages many times before. An intense “wind”, far different from mere antagonistic intent alone, blew over, and Loni looked back at her father’s face again. “How’s the communication with the “Garencieres?” Mahdi asked Abbas, “No response,” and once he got this response, he cursed, “That Zinnerman betrayed us?” and slammed his fist onto the console.

"…It doesn't matter. Destroy the "breaking horn", that "Gundam"."

Walid turned his surprised look over, and from beside him, Abbas showed a shaken expression at his father. "But that machine has information on the "Laplace Box"…!" Mahdi then glared angrily at the oldest brother who argued back, "SHUT UP!!" and yelled as he turned his bloodshot eyes at the screen.

"That's just a verbal agreement we had with those aliens. Since they intend to stop us, we must break through them. We must move forward and rip that "Gundam" to bits with the "Shamblo" claws…!"

The man saying this had a hideous face, and the body sitting on the captain's seat looked exceptionally small. Loni felt that there was something released in her chest. *Is this a crusade? Even a boy like Banagher is going to fight against us. What exactly are we doing?* The questions she had no answer to gradually appeared in her mind, and continued to pull the consciousness in the psycommu back into her body of flesh. The expanding mega particle cannon of the "Shamblo" took her father's agitated emotions, and that pressure spread out from within, chiding the thoughts linking Loni and the bits.

08:55[edit]

The ionized air got ripped, and the radial beam that fired like a needle was cursched by the surrounding buildings. The white mobile suit immediately let itself retreat, stopped its thrusters approximately 300m away, at an intersection point, and turned around without slowing down. The machine that was reaching supersonic knocked aside the vehicles on the road, and the atmosphere that was ripped apart became steam as it dragged a white trail.

"The "Unicorn Gundam"…Banagher Links?"

Riddhe stared at the white trail that was imprinted amidst the dust, and turned his stunned expression to the unexpected intruder. The key to the "Laplace Box", the product produced by the UC plan, based on the legendary white mobile suit as the blueprint, the machine that could be said to be the culprit behind everything saved him again—

The "Unicorn Gundam" scattered the psycomframe's phosphorous light and stepped onto the road as it raised the beam Gatling guns in its hands. It looked like the machine was toying with the mobile armor, but the barrier set by the reflective bits would not allow any fatal damage on it. The "Gundam" beam shots were deflected, leaving black bullet holes on the building it used to stand on, and the lines of fire were scattered right at it. The "Gundam" used the I-field on its shield to

neutralize the attacks, but it continued to slow down as it took the recoil, allowing the mobile armor to use its expansive mega-particle cannon.

That machine can pride itself on its near instantaneous maneuverability under zero gravity, but now, it's trapped by the thick atmosphere. Riddhe shook his head, told himself to leave his thoughts behind, and let the transformed "Delta Plus" waverider make an emergency turn. The "Unicorn Gundam" was caught by the beams and tangled up, before its back was slammed into the wall of the building. The mobile armor did not let go of this opportunity as it turned around at a shocking speed and lunged its large claws at its enemy. The "GM III" from before was lying at the feet of the mobile armor, still barely able to maintain its original profile—Riddhe saw the light reflected from its main camera and squeezed the trigger of the beam rifle without hesitation.

The beam that was shot down from diagonally above passed through the "GM III", turning the machine into a bright orange fireball. The shockwave that expanded caused the surrounding buildings to collapse, and the winds from the explosion filled all the streets. The massive body of the mobile armor immediately tilted sideways, and as it was surrounded by flames, it lifted its head, letting out a creaking metallic sound. During this moment, Riddhe did an emergency landing with the transformable mobile suit "Delta Plus". Its thrusters flared up once it landed, and glided along the ground like how a hover walked as it grabbed the arm of the "Unicorn Gundam" that was buried under the rubble.

"Jump on! This isn't an opponent you can handle head on!"

(Mr Riddhe…!?) he did not listen to Banagher's replying voice as he pulled the "Unicorn Gundam", checked that the other machine could stand on its own, and let its main thrusters flare out. The "Delta Plus" machine jumped up, and the "Unicorn Gundam" then lit its thrusters to follow. Both machines escaped from the scene, and the large mobile armor claws let out a biting sound as the beams scattered all around crossed the sky shrouded in black smoke.

Both machines, which barely managed to escape the perimeter created by the beams, landed on a main road located two blocks away. Riddhe examined the large frame of the mobile armor that was blocked by the buildings that stood, and checked that the hover unit at the rear end was damaged. *It's caused by the explosion of the "GM III", which means this guy;'s not immortal. Once we can break through the barrier of beams, we can defeat it. Now, the problem is how to*

make the bits collapse.

At that instant, an idea flashed in Riddhe's mind. He looked at the "Unicorn Gundam" that landed beside him on the monitor, and then looked at the personalized beam rifle it was wielding in its right hand. After that, he placed the manipulator hand of the "Delta Plus" on the other machine's shoulder, saying through the wireless communicator "We have to break through at one point" as he summoned the map of the plateau area on his window.

"If we combine your firepower with my mobility, we'll be able to break through its stomach. Can you use that beam magnum?"

(There's only one shot left.)

"Then that means that we have only one chance. Get on me. Once the waverider approaches the enemy, fire the Gatling gun at it, and once the bits are held off, fire the beam magnum at it—"

An icy feeling entered his heart, erasing the latter half of his words. He broke off contact and let the "Delta Plus" leave the scene, while the "Unicorn Gundam" retreated back. At the same time, the mega-particle cannon that was fired tore the buildings, causing dust to expand and scatter.

(Mr Riddhe…!) Banagher's yell was drowned out by the noise, and Riddhe yelled back "Talk later. Let's go!" as he let the "Delta Plus" transform into the waverider. The fighter jet saw the buildings blow up blow him and did emergency turns to dodge the mobile armor attacks and drop down in height. The "Unicorn Gundam" leapt off from the roof of the building and got onto the waverider, causing the body of the latter to tilt greatly to the side.

Riddhe tried to raise the machine before it lost its speed and veered between the mobile armor. The "Unicorn Gundam" knelt down and lit its main thrusters on the back, causing the waverider to accelerate with the thrust from two machines. It dodged the beams closing in from behind and circled behind the remains of the Hotel Empire. Once it made an emergency turn again, the "Unicorn Gundam" riding on it let its body tilt in the same direction as the waverider, grabbing onto it like a snowboard. The two machines completed a near 90 degrees turn while tilting parallel to the ground, passed through the array of skyscrapers and charged right at the mobile armor.

I really get along with this guy instinctively. Riddhe hid this bittersweet reality inside his heart as he went full throttle and let the machine remain as low as possible. The "Delta Plus" flying through passed

through the gap between the buildings, and the “Unicorn Gundam” on it raised the beam Gatling guns on its left arm to the front. *Now’s the time,* the timing was in perfect unison with Riddhe’s silent thoughts as the 4 barreled guns spun and fired mega-particles, firing a thin line of light bullets diagonally above the mobile armor. The reflective bits array reflected it off, radiating flashes everywhere. The bits moved quickly, tracking down the beams, and gathered at a spot above the mobile armor; at that moment, there was a momentarily opening at the hover unit of the exterior that looked like a hermit crab.

Chance. The moment Riddhe called this in his heart, the large body of the mobile armor suddenly spun, causing the scattered rubble to scatter dust in an explosive manner. The mobile armor immediately turned 180 degrees around, opened its mouth, and aimed its mega particle cannon at the two machines. Riddhe pulled the control sticks, and the mobile armor let out a thick belt of mega-particles. The cackling scorched air charged right at the machine, and the scattered particles that came with the shockwave burnt the flying armor below. The building below the beam path was melted until nothing was left, and the waverider barely managed to escape from the scorching hell as the rubble exploded into the sky like a volcano.

(Damn it…!) Banagher’s groan rang through the wireless communicator. They just missed by a little, and Riddhe too gritted his teeth as he glared at the mobile armor that was moving away below him.

“Can’t we just get rid of it easily…!?”

08:57[edit]

The “breaking horn” rode on the transformable mobile suit in its fighter jet form and dodged into the blind spot of the building. The feeling of the “wind” gradually faded, and Loni held her breath as she looked for the two overlapping machine silhouettes. Both presences became one as the two mobile suits summoned a “wind” that caused the reflective bits to sway slightly. “They keep dodging…!” Mahdi, who sat on the captain’s seat, grumbled.

“It appeared from that Neo Zeon ship, and now it’s fighting alongside a Federation mobile suit. This “Shamblo” won’t be sunk by that bat-like “Gundam”…!”

Mahdi ignored Abbas, who was handling the controls, and operated the main cannon as he got ready to aim. The “Shamblo” moved gradually, and the cannon finished loading its second shell before tracking the enemy unit that flew away. Loni wanted to speak up and

stop him once she saw that the Trade Center Building was in its path, but Mahdi had already squeezed the firing button of the main cannon. The “Shamblo” again let out a scorching light, and the ionized air caused the flash to fill the screen.

The Trade Center took a direct hit and gradually melted, while the hole that pierced through its upper layers expanded gradually. The construct of the upper levels lost their support as they tilted sideways and plummeted, and it took no more than 10 seconds for it to fall onto the ground. The Trade Center, which took up one-third the entire field of vision, became a flaming torch was broken into two, and the fallen constructs caused a tremendous amount of dust to rise up like a tsunami. Loni looked at the countless humans that fell together with the rubble and heard the sounds of flesh hitting the ground and bouncing off. The blunt sounds echoed in her mind, and she shuddered as she felt the flying hearts seemingly enter her helment.

No matter the gender or age, all the people in the tower were wrecked, and became filth that was not even in humanoid shape. *It’s still not working time yet, the people inside the buildings should have time to evacuate.* Loni tried to convince herself logically, but the sound of humans being wrecked continued to ring, and the screams and wails of their final moments in life, the agonizing groans over being burnt alive swarmed up on her. *It hurts, it’s hot, help me*— several thousand voices rang. Loni could hear the crying of that girl who fell in front of the parliament hall too—

“You can stop now, father…!”

Loni undid the attachments on her collar, took off and threw aside the helmet that was connected with the psycommu function. Once she did that subconsciously, she suppressed the disgust she could not shake off as she looked back at the captain’s seat behind her.

“The “breaking horn” is right. It’s pointless to keep fighting. Let’s go back.”

Her two older brothers’ shoulders shuddered, but she ignored them as she stared right at her father’s eyes. Mahdi first showed a stunned expression, “What did you say…?” before giving off a savage stare, and Loni could not help but get up from the seat installed with a psycommu inside it.

“We should have expressed our thoughts sufficiently. I learned that Allah has a merciful and understanding heart. if we continue to massacre, we’ll be defying God.”

She climbed up the ladder beside the seat and approached the captain's seat. "What are you doing? Get back to your seat." Mahdi growled, but Loni ignored him as she approached.

"There are women and children on the Federation streets too. Father, please show mercy…"

"Shut up! Did you forget how your mother died!?"

Mahdi swung aside the hand that intended to touch his shoulder and turned his knife-like sharp stare at Loni. She was pushed aside by the arm that forgot to hold back its strength, and her back slammed into the wall behind her.

"Your mother killed a Federation soldier in the midst of the chaos after the war. She killed a despicable soldier who intended to rape a Muslim female in a refugee camp. The jury was completely one-sided, your mother was sentenced to death, and I couldn't do anything to save her. I could only let your mother die all just to protect the trust of the company, all just to protect the cursed inheritance as a "Descendant of Dubai"!

I endured everything all for the sake of this moment. I'm going to use this "Shamblo" to wreck the parliament hall and prompt all the Muslims to rise up. Our family's tragic wish will be fulfilled soon, and now even you want to betray me?"

The tears rolled down his suddenly widened eyes, dampening his face. *This isn't father. It's impossible for such a man to be my father.* Loni thought, but felt that this might be the first time she was seeing her father's true state, and felt an indescribable disappointment expanding in his heart. She felt like the moment when she heard news that her mother died, when the world she was looking forward to was cut away from her, when she felt like she was abandoned in the darkness—and at this moment, she thoroughly felt the sense of depression that could not be described when she lost a relative.

The back that looked as tall and large as a mountain whenever it stood in front of her during worship no longer existed. Loni lowered her head, leaned her back against the wall, and turned her determined-looking face at Mahdi again. As he quickly wiped his tears, Mahdi did not meet his daughter in the eyes as he said, "The barrier will weaken. Hurry up and head back." As she stared at this father of hers, she reached her hand out to her ankle.

"Father, please stop."

She pulled out an automatic handgun from her ankle holster, raised it

to her chest, and pointed it at the helmet in front of her. “Loni…” Mahdi growled as his eyes shuddered, his 2 black iris meeting with Loni’s.

“Mother doesn’t hope that you do this. We’re just letting the hatred and sadness we have spread across the world.”

“You…you pointed a gun, at your own father…?”

The rage rising through the pores caused his expression to twist, scattering dust upon the obsidian-like eyes. Loni was unwilling to look on as she yelled, “Your soul’s already swallowed by this machine!” and looked away from her father in front of her.

“Please turn back to normal and become the usual father—”

“SHUT UP!”

Mahdi yelled as he reached his hand out to Loni, holding an automatic handgun as well. On seeing that gun, Loni saw her father squeeze the trigger, and her sights was suddenly occupied by the flash.

She did not hear the gunshot, and the impact that exploded within her chest sent her flying to the wall behind her. The flash vanished, and the gun muzzle gradually appeared in her sights again, showing smoke swirling from it and lighting her father's crying face. Her sights tilted to the side, becoming blurry, and her horizontally slumped body leaned beside the captain's seat.

"Father, what did you…!" "SHUT UP!" the voice of this angry outlash slowly faded, and Loni's vision that finally recovered started to darken. She used the last of her consciousness to turn her stare to the main monitor.

The "breaking horn" —the "Gundam" that had the name of the legendary beast, could be seen flying in the midst of the sky stained by mirages and smoke. *The person causing that refreshing "wind" to blow definitely won't make such a mistake. He probably won't be restrained by the twisted and rigid ideas, and can snap the fences restricting people with that iron will of his. Even if he's slandered as a bat—no, that's not a bat. It's an actual existence. It's flying easily in the middle of the world divided between enemy and allies, and it will head back to the horizon of possibilities sooner or later. Unicorn, this name really fits it completely. It's a sacred and noble thought instrument.*

I finally got to meet you, but this is the only thing I can do. I'm sorry, Banagher… Loni's fading consciousness mused, and she closed her eyes. She could not hear the argument between her father and her brothers, and the clear silence descended upon her body that was lying horizontally.

09:00[edit]

The surge of emotions became a poignant agitation, causing Banagher's chest to resonate as it shook his bones and flesh. The machine in front of him was giving off a thought like a hot air blowing through the desert—

"Miss Loni…is that you, Miss Loni?"

Banagher did not understand the reason. However, he could be certain that he was not mistaken with this feeling. Loni was calling him, telling him loudly, *take down this machine, take down this thing that's making people walk down a wrong path.* He stood in front of the "Delta Plus",looked down at the massive body of the "Shamblo" from beyond the smoke, and could only frown as he saw how the enemy unit stopped due to some mysterious reason. (The bits are moving strangely!) It seemed that Riddhe too had this sensation.

The bits remained around the “Shamblo” that slowed down, and had nowhere to go as it remained in the air. The power that protected the “Shamblo”,the pressure that could deflect all interference disappeared. *It can work,* Banagher erased the feeling he had from Loni in his mind that concluded this and yelled back, “LET’S GO, MR RIDDHE!” The “Delta Plus” lowered its height immediately and flared all the thrusters gathered on its back.

Banagher too stepped on the pedal, and the “Delta Plus” that obtained the thrust from the “Unicorn Gundam” charged right at the “Shamblo”. The rapidly-approaching danger caused the “Shamblo” to shudder, and the trails of beams immediately expanded upon the two machines flying at low height. Banagher saw the reflective bits start to move again, and subconsciously let the “Unicorn Gundam” left hand reach in front of him. *The hard pressure from before is gone, we can take it down.* He gathered his consciousness instinctively and closed his eyes, while the “Unicorn Gundam” that responded to the thoughts suddenly opened its five fingers.

The NT-D sign flashed, and the psycoframe increased in brightness. An invisible wave was released from the opened hand, and the reflective bits surrounding the “Shamblo” were shaken as if a strong wind blew by. The bits li their vernier thrusters, but could not resist that invisible pressure in the end, and were scattered away like they were bounced off.

Several bits lost control and flew away in an awry manner, while several others hit the surrounding buildings and were taken down (The barrier’s broken…!) Riddhe’s voice rang into Banagher’s ears, and Banagher opened his eyes.

“The main cannon’s coming! Pull down!”

The shockwaves knocked down the street lamps on the road, and the “Delta Plus” immediately flew down at low altitude. Banagher stared at the rows of buildings flying on both sides and switched the weapon to the beam magnum that was left with one shot. The “Shamblo” quickly turned around to fire the mega-particle cannon in its mouth at the two machines. “Charge right over there!” Banagher shouted as he put his finger on the trigger button.

The “Shamblo” main cannon let out a burst of light, and the wild winds of shockwaves and scattered particles grazed over the two machines’head. The “Unicorn Gundam” raised its shield to protect the machine and its right hand to aim the beam rifle as it ripped through the heat wave. The mouth was hot due to the aftereffects of the beams, and there was a Neo Zeon crest below it, on the chest, the

source of the madness that would cause people to stray from the path. Perhaps Mahdi and Zinnerman were both going crazy because of that madness. That kind of negative pressure, born out of human intellect and blood, existed in his body too.

“I can see it, Miss Loni…!”

Loni’s body was spread wide open, telling Banagher where she should aim. The eyes that were of the same color as Audrey’s, similar to his mother, were guiding him. His fingers shuddered for just a moment before he calmly squeezed the trigger of the beam rifle.

The last round was ejected, and the mega-particle cannon that was compressed with 4 times the energy of an ordinary beam rifle was fired. It went through the body of the “Shamblo” directly, burning through the cockpit block, and tore past the hover unit on its tail. The lingering fragrance from Loni vanished, and the “Shamblo” that exploded from within let out black smoke from its mouth. *I can hear Mahdi screaming,* as he thought about this, the “Delta Plus” went over the head of the “Shamblo” and passed by behind it.

A chain of explosions was triggered within, and once the gaps on all the armor were letting out black smoke, the beetle-like head of the“Shamblo” sunk weakly. The large claws supported by the flexible mechanical arms tensed up in a struggling manner, and the hover units that were floating above the ground slightly touched the road surface. The “Shamblo” had ceased to move completely, and the large remnant was exposed amidst the rubble. The lingering smoke was like a hill surrounding the machine, covering the end of the “Descendant of Dubai”.

09:06[edit]

“The enemy machine has stopped?”

The images taken by the EWAC machine 3,000m above in the sky could be distinguished, but were definitely not clear as it had been dodging the enemy’s attacks. Bright stared at the screen and focused on the silhouette that looked like a mobile armor as he heard the response from the EWAC machine pilot, (Looks that way. It seems that the “Gundam” got rid of it.)

“Gundam”. Bright repeated this name he was very familiar with and let out a breath from his nose. The enemy units hidden along the coast were most likely dealt with, Solton’s squadron had landed onto the Dakar, and the bridge of “Ra Cailum” was gradually reverting back to its usual calmness. He sensed that the killing intent had vanished,

looked away from the mobile armor that seemed to be silence, and stared at the back of Meran, standing beside the communication operator, “What about the coordinates of the ship that released the “Gundam”?”on hearing this question, Meran turned his slightly black face to the other man, “Positive 087, currently leaving gradually.” And said this with a slightly meaningful voice.

“Perhaps it is that “Garencieres”. Do we pursue after it?”

Meran then walked towards the captain’s seat and said with a voice only Bright could hear. *If it were the mothership of that “Gundam”, the chances of it being the case is very high. The mobile suit that acts as the key to the “Box” in the UC plan—the “Unicorn Gundam” was taken by Neo Zeon, so why did it stand up for our side? Is it because it’s a “Gundam”?* Bright pondered for a while, came up with a childish conclusion to his own question, and answered the other man “No, there’s no need.” He turned his stare to the front.

“Check the damage on Dakar, and come up with a strategy to aid them. Is the “Gundam” still there?”

“Yes. It seems to be moving alongside Romeo 008.”

“Good. Get Ensign Riddhe to secure the “Gundam”, and send our landing forces there.”

Anyway, this is all we can do for now. Bright ignored Meran, who was facing the communication seat, and narrowed his eyes at the black smoke that remained parallel to his sight. *Even though the battle has ended, the flames lit in Dakar won’t vanish immediately. The mobile armor is less than 1km away from the parliament hall and can logically create tens of thousands of casualties, but it finally stopped. What intentions does it exactly have for attacking Dakar? What intentions did the “Unicorn Gundam” have for stopping it*—he put his hand onto his head as he could not comprehend what was going on at all. “We’re still not connected to the Senate Council’s communication channel?” Bright spoke to the communication operator, but a short approach alarm rang, and the operator then shouted back, “A hi-heat source coming in from positive 093!”

“It’s giving off a signal identifiable from our side, but the affiliation is unknown. It’s currently headed to Dakar.”

“Reinforcements? What’s the status with the laser communication?”

While the bridge was in the midst of a commotion, “No response” the communication operator’s voice rang. “Continue to call the other side. Air surveillance, don’t slack off!” Bright glanced over at Meran who

angrily growled, and then turned his stare to the radar screen. *The identification serial code starting with DO-DAI is certainly the serial of a Federation-use mobile suit transport carrier, but the heat source of the mobile suit riding on it is blinking an unidentified code. It's an allied machine, but this flying object with unknown nature and motives still came to Dakar after so many delays—*

The killing intent that vanished once before caused Bright to feel his hairs stand again. He inadvertently clenched his fists and looked at the black rising on the other side.

09:09[edit]

(Romeo 008, do you hear me? Solton's squadron is currently approaching you. Secure the unknown Gundam-type. If it has any intention of resisting, use whatever means you want. Secure the Gundam-type mobile suit—)

The voice from the communication channel was filled with noise, and Riddhe's originally elated body and mind calmed down thoroughly. He cut off the communication screen that only had a voice, and panned the sights of his main camera to the left. The "Delta Plus" that landed on the wastelands of rubble moved its head and stared at the body of the mobile armor that was giving off thick smoke from within. The eyes that were reminiscent of a human were glowing from beyond that veil of smoke, and the V-shaped blade antenna showed its silhouette as the "Unicorn Gundam" slowly revealed itself as it approached Riddhe.

The psycoframe that was revealed from its armor was fading in brightness, and the red reflective-like glow covered its body like tattoos. Riddhe looked back at it again from close range, and he found that the Gundam-type head looked as life-like as a human wearing a helmet—the eyes were showing a calm glow, seemingly expressing the feelings of the pilot within it as well, and his mind was secretly incensed by this.

This is the mobile suit with the key to the "Box". As long as this guy doesn't exist, everything wouldn't happen. If I can just not understand the fate of my "family", I won't have to bear this burden on my shoulders and sit in the cockpit like an ordinary pilot. If this guy didn't appear in front of me, if Mineva can become an uninteresting woman—regret and anger fought each other within him, expanding, causing him to forget the feeling of the way he managed to link up well with the machine in front of him. The thrill when they were accelerating for each other as they raced caused all his senses to sharpen. If only I can remain at that moment of ecstasy.

(Are you Ensign Riddhe?)

The metals bellowed as they touched each other, and the voice of the pilot rang within the interaction window. The “Unicorn Gundam” was touching the “Delta Plus” on the shoulder as it opened the communication circuit. The excitement had calmed down, and the other side seemed to have calmed down too. Riddhe lifted his head slightly and saw Banagher Link’s face on the communication window.

(I never thought that I would meet you here in such a way…is Audrey alright? Did you make contact with the “Nahel Argama”—)

Banagher intended to lean the body forward as he talked. However, Riddhe did not look at the other party’s face. He held his breath and fulfilled what he had to do at this point.

The “Delta Plus” shook aside the hand resting on its shoulder and pushed the “Unicorn Gundam” aside. The “Gundam” tripped, and by the time it managed to steady itself with the AMBAC, the “Delta Plus” was aiming its beam rifle at the abdomen.

(Mr Riddhe…!?)

“I’ve received an order to capture that “Gundam”. Get off that cockpit, Banagher.”

Luckily, the visuals on the communication window were cut off the moment the interaction channel was removed. (Mr Riddhe, why…!) Riddhe merely let Banaher’s outcry chide his ears as his hand holding onto the control stick was trembling.

“Don’t call me as if we’re close with each other. Without you, things wouldn’t end up like that…!”

(Why’s that so? Mr Riddhe, Audrey—)

“You and the “Gundam” are obstacles preventing this Audrey you speak of—Mineva from living peacefully. Get off!”

My chest is going to break open. At this rate, I’ll go crazy too—just like this mobile armor that lies dead in front of me. Riddhe lowered his eyes and waited for Banagher to answer in a prayer. *I feel you’re a man of your word. I’ll leave Audrey to you.* The boy with such strong-willed eyes actually used those words to lay a curse on him and bind him, and though he hoped that the other party would step aside after realizing what was going on—

(I don’t want to.)

The other person rejected RIddhe's selfish thoughts, and the expected answer rang within his ears. He widened his eyes, gritted his teeth, and pointed the beam rifle.

"Don't make me burn you alongside the cockpit!"

(I won't get down. I won't hand the "Unicorn" to you when you're talking like this, Ensign Riddhe. Please tell me, tell me the reason!)

The "Unicorn Gundam" took a step back and turned its duel-eye sensors, replicating the eyes of the pilot, at the "Delta Plus". Having spoke up, the other party turned its defiant stubborn eyes right at Riddhe, whose finger on the trigger was trembling as he turned away from the "Gundam"that had a human-like face.

Squeeze the trigger, Riddhe told himself in his heart. *The"Box" definitely mustn't be opened. You should have heard of the truth. You can't let the "power that can topple the current world" be released. Nobody has that right. Even if you don't take it back, the secret will be secured if you destroy the "Unicorn Gundam" here. Everything will end like that, and you can return back to your original life. Nobody will blame you. The other side of the scale is the fate of the world, any act is allowed, even if Mineva—*

No. This answer that flashed through caused his hand holding on the control stick to shudder, and he sensed how cold the sweat he was giving off was. *Mineva won't forgive me, and I won't forgive myself, even if I, a part of the 100-year lie, is already tainted beyond hope* — he looked down and opened his tense hands. The lock-on signal vanished, and the "Delta Plus" arm raising the beam rifle dropped weakly.

"…Go."

I'm an idiot. He mused in his heart that felt neither regret nor relief as he moved his finger away from the trigger. The "Unicorn Gundam"shuddered, and Banagher let out a troubled voice, (Mr Riddhe…)

"Go! The Federation reinforcements will come over immediately. You must leave Dakar before it gets surrounded. If you drag on, I'll—"

The words he should continue on were covered by the sharp approaching alarm. He immediately checked the coordinates and looked up and the sky together with the "Unicorn Gundam" that was in a defensive stance.

The smoke was blown aside by the wind, and there was a white plane

flying by for a short moment in the blue sky. Something small, the size of a fingertip, was already over their heads, adding wings to the rectangular machine, It appeared under the sunlight, and the humanoid figure shown from there entered Riddhe's eyes.

The mobile suit that had its limbs spread wide open fell down quickly like it was parachuting down. The bright morning sun lit its streamlined profile, and the golden lone horn on its forehead was radiating. That machine was pitch black, and it was flickering strongly under the bright sunlight, absorbing everything in—

"A black…"Unicorn"?"

The eyes hidden by the facemask let out an attacking flair. Riddhe unconditionally moved and let the "Delta Plus" fall back, while the "Unicorn Gundam" retreated at almost the same instant too. The scorching beam came a moment late as it broke the road surface. That beam caused the surrounding rubble to vaporize, shake the remains of the mobile armor, and the explosive flash and shockwaves expanded right near where the two machines were.

That's not an ordinary mega-particle shot. Is that the same type as the "Unicorn Gundam" personalized beam rifle—the beam Magnum? Riddhe dodged about in the midst of the scattering rubble, brought his machine to the blind spot of the mobile armor, and aimed at the descending black machine with its beam rifle. The black "Unicorn"-like machine lit its thrusters, spun around in the air, and dodged the bullet path at a speed unfitting a free-falling object. The beam Gatling gun of the "Unicorn Gundam" spewed out a bunch of beams and expanded a line of mega-particle fire at where the black "Unicorn"was landing, but this action did not managed to restrain it. The black "unicorn"opened the shield on its left arm, created an I-field, and parried aside the fire from the Gatling guns without missing one.

There was a golden light radiating from the shield that opened to form an X-frame, and a golden glow appeared from the opposing armor, causing Riddhe to feel a chill. *It has the same structure as the "Unicorn Gundam",and its psycoframe glows as well*—the black-based machine with golden patterns ducked into the blind spot of the building, and as Riddhe inadvertently moved there, its roof was crushed. The mega particles that wrecked the two levels pierced the side of the "Delta Plus" feet, while the heat of the asphalt being vaporized and the shockwaves lunged at it at the same time. The "Delta Plus" was knocked aside with the rubble, and its back was slammed into the buildings that were collapsing.

The dust rose, covering the machine that was sunk within the building wall. The black "Unicorn" did not care about the "Delta Plus" that was stuck, landed on an unscathed roof, and turned its dual-eye sensor under the facemask at the "Unicorn Gundam". Its arm quickly raised the beam rifle and aimed at the "Unicorn Gundam" kneeling on the floor. Riddhe saw this surreal scene of two "Unicorns" facing each other, pulled the control sticks that were not reacting, "RUN AWAY!" and yelled with all his might,

"IT'S AIMING FOR YOU, FALL BACK!"

The collapsing rubble hit the machine, robbing the sight off Riddhe's all-view monitor. The veil of dust covered the silhouettes of the two machines, and the last thing he managed to see were the red and golden lights rising out before the deep darkness shut off his sights.

09:13[edit]

On a closer look, the black "Unicorn" that was falling at around the 20th level did not have a lone horn. The multiple long horns were lined down the middle of the head, creating the look of a horse mane or a rooster's crown. The long horns were giving off a golden glow, lighting a bright color on the fully black machine, and also added some excessive decoration on the motionless face under the facemask.

The eyes glowing under the black facemask were looking at Banagher, radiating a sinister presence that was no difference from arrogance. *Kill,* the "aura" expressing this intent passed through the armor and came right at the cockpit. Banagher instinctively squeezed the trigger of the beam Gatling gun. The mega particle shots that were fired rapidly blew apart the roof of the building, causing new dust to sputter from there, but the black "Unicorn" seemed to have prepared for this as it jumped off the roof, lit its thrusters flare, flew into the sky, turned its back away towards the sun, and suddenly opened its limbs.

The limbs expanded from within, and the armor gaps showed a golden glow. The skirt armor on the waist and the armor on the shoulders lid apart, two beam saber grips rose from behind, and the mane on the head split down the middle. The long horn that had multiple spikes broke in half, and the multi-blade antenna reminiscent of lightning decorated the forehead. At the same time, the facemask spun half a round upwards, and the golden color surrounded the dark dual-eye sensors appeared like eyes.

““Gundam”…!?”

There were no other words to explain. That was a black “Unicorn Gundam”—no, a “Gundam” like a lion, with a mane that formed a V-shape, radiating a golden glow. It landed and stepped onto the asphalt ground, and then went all out with its thrusters, going at an equivalent output level as that of the “Unicorn”. The black shadow ripped through the smoke and charged over, filling Banagher’s eyes as he could only widen them in shock.

“Fast…!”

The intention automatic system did not respond at all, and the difference in mobility was too great. The “Unicorn Gundam” took the slam from the black “Gundam”, was sent flying several meters away, and crashed into a commercial building surrounded by glass. A large around of glass rained down, almost burying the machine trapped in the building, but the black “Gundam”, which stopped its thrusters, charged forward again. Banagher fired his Gatling gun to hold the opponent off and let the “Unicorn Gundam” get up. The black “Gundam” kicked the road and agilely dodged the shots before jumping up and kicking into the back of the “Unicorn Gundam”, whose right arm was restrained before Banagher could look back.

It was slammed into the tenant building, and while it was picked up, it was slammed into the building on the other end. The weight of the 30 ton body was multiplied with the speed, and the building that took the weight of the “Unicorn Gundam” immediately exploded and collapsed. The impact the machine took caused the linear seat to rattle, and Banagher felt his internal organs shaking as he let out a yell, unable to bear the pain. The corroded psycowaves prompted the machine to respond, and the “Unicorn Gundam” got up on its own and reached its hand for the beam saber on its shoulder. However, as its hand held onto the grip, the black “Gundam” had already snuck right in front of the “Unicorn Gundam” as it delivered a kick to the abdomen at a lightning quick speed.

Banagher’s world was suddenly twisted, and the shock absorbers could not absorb the impact completely as it shook his head. His helmet attachments fell off, his body was ripped off from the linear seat as it laid onto the display board, and after that, his sights were blocked by the air cushions that suddenly appeared. His chest felt a pressure reaching his lungs, and his consciousness was gradually fading away from his body that could not breathe. The “Unicorn Gundam”, which took this powerful kick, knelt down, knocked aside the vehicles on the road as it spun, and did not get up as its white frame remained still on the asphalt plain, unable to get up.

The black machine stood with the sun behind, and the “Gundam” which looked like a lion turned its emotionless stare at the “Unicorn Gundam”. Those human-like eyes seemed to overlap with a certain person he was familiar with. *Is it my imagination?* As his consciousness faded, he looked at the eyes of that black “Gundam” and called out the name of that person from within his throat.

“Miss…Marida…”

The darkness intensified, and his remaining consciousness was slowly

devoured. The icy cold darkness that led to hell was like the armor of the black “Gundam”, surrounding Banagher and sending him to a lulling unconscious abyss.

Volume 7 – Black Unicorn

Chapter 1[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The air was filled with the peculiar odor of paint and overheated wires, a stench unique to a military battleship where one would have no choice but to accept that he was in a sealed space. The liftgrip lined along the wall became a long and useless installation under gravity, and what was extended in front of Alberto’s eyes was a passage that was without any characteristic except for practical use. Alberto Vist was running down the passage, ignoring the bouncing of his loose flesh whenever his soles hit the floor and his struggling knees as he dashed down the long passage. He pushed aside the battleship crew on the passage, arrived at the T-junction where the wall stood in front of him, and saw the air lock of the mobile suit deck he was looking for.

He, who was so anxious that he was seemingly about to knock into the door panel, did not check the values of the pressure gauge as he pressed the opening switch. The wind that blew outside was proof that the air outside had moved into the mobile suit deck. At this point, the

“Ra Cailum” was moving in a relatively low height, but the air pressure at 500m height was still a lot lower than the air pressure maintaining the inside of the ship. Alberto arrived at a corner of the mobile suit deck that could be called a large hollow cave, followed the narrow channel along the wall, poked his body out from the handrail and looked at the bow of the ship. The shutter linked to the catapult deck was completely opened merely moments ago, and the blunt heavy sounds caused by the metals stepping on the floor rang throughout as he saw an abnormally shaped uniformly black machine pass through the shutter.

The streamlined cold-looking machine had a mask that completely covered the profile of its face. The mechanics solders saw majestic sight of the golden shining horn at the top of the “Banshee”, and stopped whatever they were doing as they gave it a look of shock. The white machine of the “Unicorn” could be seen beside the “Banshee”, but this machine that had a horn too was slumped weakly and could only stand straight with the support of the “Banshee”. The left arm equipped with the shield was slumped limply while the muzzle of the beam Gatling was almost sticking to the ground.

As seen through the monitor on the bridge, the pitch black shiny armor of the “Banshee” showed no signs of any scars as compared to the “Unicorn” that had lost all life within. Alberto basked his face in the air filled with the stench of oil, stared at the white machine that was thoroughly stained in dust, and charged towards the mobile suit hangar located at the wall. He could see Bentner and his assistants, dressed in white clothes, on the gondola beside the hangar set aside temporarily for the “Banshee”s use as they worked on the observation equipment they brought into the ship.

The “Banshee” ignored the humans looking at it as it bent down like a human and let the “Unicorn” resting on its shoulders slump onto the deck. “How’s the situation?” Alberto panted as he got onto the gondola from the gap and asked Bentner, whose bald head turned around as he arched his back, saying,

“I should say that it’s more ideal than what we expected here. The adaptability the specimen showed with regards to the “Banshee” is rather flawless, and there’re no problems with the link with the NT-D.”

Albeto looked at the Newtype Research Facility Head who was sneering away and felt a sense of unease rather than relief. The backdoor left beforehand meant that the brainwashing was incomplete, and someone sent her in discreetly. “This is a case of being easier than it is. Perhaps Madam Martha’s values managed to provide an

influence here.” While Bentner continued on, Alberto reached his hand for the elevator button of the gondola, and descended 10m while Bentner and his assistants hurriedly grabbed the handrail. Once the gondola stopped, he hopped onto the deck.

The “Banshee”s massive frame was headed towards the hangar as it moved its feet that were as large as an automobile. Alberto glanced aside at the abdomen that was approximately level with the 4th storey, and at that instant, recalled the face of the “specimen” inside the cockpit, and ran towards the “Unicorn” lying slumped on the deck. The mobile suit squad that was deployed to Dakar had already returned, and the deck hangar was already half-filled with landing crafts. Alberto told himself secretly to finish his own job before the ship crew and pilots calmed down. He darted around the feet of the “Jestas” that were giving off smoke caught from the fires, and crossed the deck together with his subordinates who were starting to gather around him. “WHAT’S GOING ON!?” However, an angry roar stopped him in his tracks.

“I just got blindsided by that black “Unicorn”! Call out the pilot! Who’s the one in charge here!?”

The pilot was stopped by the subordinates in black suits, but he still turned his furious stare at Alberto, who had an impression on his face. He spotted the machine, the “Delta Plus” that was lying on its back as it was being taken in after the assault of the “Banshee”, and faked a genuine smile as he answered, “My my, isn’t that Ensign Riddhe?”

“I heard that you died in battle on the “Nahel Argama”. It’s really great to see you safe and sound.”

The pilot widened his eyes and gave a startled look back at Alberto. “You’ Anaheim’s…” Riddhe Marcenas said, “I’m Alberto Vist of the Vist Foundation.” only to be interrupted by Alberto, who looked over the shoulder of his subordinate and stared right at the blond hair that looked agitated from the battlefield.

“I have to apologize to you for the inappropriate handling of the situation. The Foundation ordered the pilot of the “Banshee” to secure the “Unicorn” as a top priority mission.”

“The “Banshee”…you’re referring to that black “Unicorn”?”

“Exactly. Currently, it’s the RX-0 with the highest completion rate, and doesn’t have the excessive item of the Laplace Program. One can say it’s a mobile suit that’s purely designed to tackle Newtypes.” Riddhe gasped and pulled his lower jaw up, showing the guilt of a similar

secret they shared. He, as the real son of Ronan Marcenas, was a hawk sent from the Settlement Issues Council, and Alberto understood this as well. *Don't let him get close*—Alberto commanded with this expression and ignored the stare clinging onto him as he tried to turn away. "Oi, hold it! What authority do you people have…!" An angry voice followed, but Alberto shook him off by saying "Captain Bright understands." And quickly approached the "Unicorn".

There were burn marks all over the white machine as it was dyed a layer of black stain. A steamy hot wind blew at Alberto's face as the latter arrived at its feet. The mechanics equipping with firefighting equipment were on standby around the machine in case a fire broke up. "Nobody's to get close to it! That's our Foundation's property!" Alberto growled and put on the gloves his subordinates handed him as his moved through the crowd. As his subordinates scattered to prevent any of the ship crew from approaching, Alberto did not find as he brought his hand to touch the still-scalding "Unicorn".

He climbed up the ladder his subordinate prepared and used the front armor at the waist as a footing and climbed to the cockpit hatch at the abdomen. The key of the "Laplace Box" Cardeas created, this pure white machine that bore the fate of the world—was finally in front of his sights. Alberto originally intended to use the "Ra Cailum" as the base for the search, but he never thought that he would be able to get his hands on the "Unicorn" right after he met the ship. He would not allow anyone else to interfere, and intended to immediately cut up the abdomen to extract the secrets of the "Box". He used his gloved hand to touch his face that immediately felt feverish, stood beside the cockpit cover, and whispered to his subordinate that followed up, "Do it." The subordinate nodded, opened the access hatch, and pulled the emergency lever. The sound of hot air being exhausted could be hoard, the cover that covered the torso to the abdomen was opened, and the rectangular cockpit hatch appeared in front of Alberto's eyes.

The cockpit was still bright as it was function. Alberto waited for his subordinates to draw their automatic pistols, checked the situation inside the cockpit, nodded, and stepped into that cramped ball-shaped space. On the linear seat surrounded by the all-view monitor, one could see a pilot in his suit, lying limp on it.

Banagher Links—he muttered the name he could not shake off in his heart ever since he arrived onto Earth, and peered at the groggy face through the helmet. *The swollen face looked like it was punched before; is it because he was exposed to the tremendous G-force?* Alberto shook off this suspicion that suddenly appeared in his mind and looked around at the all-view monitor which displayed the

scenery on the deck. There was nothing abnormal to note of, other than a few windows that were not functional. Alberto did not know the circumstances which led to the “Unicorn” taking part in the battle of Dakar, but since the NT-D was activated, there was a very high probability that new information was revealed. He brought his hand to the linear seat, stared at the monitors that were full of static noise, and then turned to look at the display board on the seat.

Alberto saw that on the 3 display boards, the middle one was showing the “La+” logo, and his heart immediately jumped. This was the thing, the Laplace Program that lit the way to the “Box”. Since the system was on standby, he would be able to retrieve the data just by operating on it. *Is it an intermediate point here? Or is it going to reveal the location of the “Box” directly?* he looked behind, checked that no one was peeping into the cockpit, and reached his trembling hand for the touch panel. at that moment, the sound of the power being shut off rang, and he was surrounded by darkness.

The all-view monitor images disappeared, showing the ball-shaped monitor panels. The “LA+” signal disappeared like an illusion. Alberto desperately activated the switches of the standby power, but no matter how he tried, there was no electricity, and the touch panel’s signal did not revert to its original state. *Was the generator cables burnt off?* He wiped his forehead that was sweating like rain, and as he reached his hand for the monitor beside the linear seat, he saw a white object flash by his sights.

“It’s useless there.”

From below the helmet visor, the whites of Banagher’s eyes appeared in the darkness, and his swollen face was distorted with a smile. The monitor did not shut off naturally, it was switched off—Alberto felt a chill in his mind as he understood this, and stared at the boy lying limp on the linear seat. The latter’s firm stare overlapped with Cardeas’ eyes, and Alberto felt the sweat on his body cool down.

Part 2[edit]

It had been more than a day, but the sky of Dakar broadcasted through the television was still a light brown. Perhaps it was new dust raised during the removal of rubble and relief aid, or perhaps it was the deaths of 40,000 who were killed without reason lingering at this place.

The wreckage of the mobile armor was surrounded by several construction machines, showing its body amidst the hastily assembled scaffolding. There were so many wounded that they were lined on the corridors, and the dire situation of the city hospitals was such that one

would mistake them for guerilla hospitals. The wasteland of rubble that extended beyond the horizon, the dead and wounded that overlay on them, and the marquee messages for the missing were all roaming under a color of tea brown. Ronan Marcenas stared at the number of casualties that continued to increase in thousands, and felt a familial sense of guilt in his heart— *are these the victims of the Box?* As he felt this surge of emotions, he looked away from the television in his office. He turned his chair to the window where the sunset was shining in, and brought his ear to the phone receiver tucked between his shoulder and cheek again as he remarked wryly, “Everyone’s being extremely busy now. It will hurt to have suspected without proof here.”

“This incident is really completely unexpected to us. As you know, Dakar has a lot of capital invested in it. I’m just telling you over the phone that I too used the name of my company to buy Dakar company shares. What benefit does it have to me to turn the shares I have into scrap paper?”

(It can stimulate the Federation army realignment plan—I wonder how you feel if you explain it this way?)

A woman’s voice let out this immediate answer through the hotline phone directed via satellite. (This incident most definitely shows that there are threats still present on Earth. Including the space forces, this can prompt the armed forces on Earth to strengthen themselves and sweep all Zeon forces before the Republic dissembles…it will definitely bring about great economic benefit. The loss of the stocks in Dakar can be replaced easily like that, right?)

Martha Vist Carbine—the Empress of the Moon was a woman not to be underestimated. This determined and influential person was just as the economic and political world described, and at this point, she was snickering on the other end on the phone. She had just gotten onto the “Ra Cailum” which rushed off to Dakar, and she was already on the Captain’s hotline phone as she made this call to Ronan’s office, giving this deliberate taunting words. Ronan had already known that Martha came to Earth, but he had to admit that she, who dealt with the situation in Dakar faster than anyone else, who even sent in the 2nd RX-0 to the scene as a souvenir, was abnormally active in this. Ronan pulled in the “Ra Cailum” to search for the “Box” in order to prevent the Vist Foundation from interfering, but looking at the current situation, he was being apprehended.

Since Martha could interfere with the backing of the Senate Council Vice Chairman, it was likely that she had at least acquired the approval of the Senate Council chairman, or even a high ranking official

approval—this possibility did exist. *To these high ranking officials who would react according to the winds and cared only on their short-term benefits and self-preservation, how much impact will the incident in Dakar bring to them? How much restrain will they abandon?* Ronan felt through the phone call that Martha had everything clear in mind, “In that case, you’ll be the ones benefitting from this, right?” and answered back, smearing mud on the other party’s face.

“Anaheim Electronics President’s wife…no, I should be calling you the substitute leader of the Vist Foundation now, right?”

(Just call me Martha.)

“Then, Martha, even if our main plea is to increase the military supplies, we will definitely not use the capital as a sacrifice. Unlike Lhasa three years ago, we have many casualties on the government’s side too. First, the party that triggered this incident wasn’t Neo Zeon, but Islamic radicals who preached about breaking away from the orthodox teachings.”

At this moment, the television just so happened to show the Garvey Enterprise building, and Ronan turned his sights to glance at that image. There were police cars parked right in front of the building, and the investigators carrying cardboard boxes were gathered in hordes like ants at the main entrance. The investigations included the dealings with other companies, and the initial stage of the various procedures with regards to the freezing of the Garvey Enterprises assets were most likely completed. The solar generators Garvey Enterprise had were absorbed under the Government’s control, and the operating profits would be used to rebuild Dakar and compensate the bereaved relatives of the victims. This process was most likely planned to the details by assistance teams created by related independent organizations. Fortunately, or not, the Senate Council and the surrounding official areas managed to avoid this calamity, and the Senators were slowly gathered at this capital that was off its alert phase, summoned for an emergency parliamentary meeting.

The objective of the man named Mahdi Garvey was still unconfirmed, but this one terrorist attack was not enough to cause the gears of money and power to stop. The bribery of the supervising institutes to build that mobile armor, the political contributions, and the expenses required to rebuild the capital; these was the bloodstream of the capitalist society, locked within a sealed loop. *Did this man descend upon madness because of the “Box” too?* He looked at Mahdi’s VTR that was being replayed again, and uttered these words in his heart before looking back outside the window again. (These radicals you say

have a Neo Zeon insignia on their mobile armor. Also, there were eyewitness reports of the “Sleeves” mobile suits, right?) Martha argued back and used her voice to choke Ronan’s neck.

“There are always implications behind lawbreakers, regardless of principles or propositions. Anyway, the shock from this incident is second only to the previous “Char’s Counterattack”. The security on all the government facilities have to be increased, and all ships moving to and from Earth will be checked on without exception. Of course, including the remnants of Neo Zeon, we will carry out the thorough eradication of the terrorists. Considering he economic losses from the delay in shipments and the added adjusted budgets on both the military and public safety sides, I wonder how much more money we will have to spend here—”

(Chairman Ronan, what you said is ostensibly right, but we civilians have it tougher in terms of money. Let’s stop groveling in the dirt on each other and talk about something that will benefit both parties.)

“I hope so too, but I am someone who has to get to somewhere immediately too.”

(Then I’ll cut the chase. I heard that a certain highly esteemed visitor is currently residing in your residence, Chairman. I hope you can hand that person over to our care.)

Ronan’s heart that would not be shaken by practically anything suddenly skipped a beat, and his hand that was holding onto the receiver trembled. He had already prepared himself when he asked the military for a full time surveillance watch that ‘her’ staying in his house would soon be revealed, but he never expected the other party to stab him first. “I don’t understand what you’re trying to say…” Ronan immediately answered, but Martha again took the initiative as she cut him off, (You’re the one who said that you don’t want to waste time.) and spoke with a cold tone.

(This is for that person’s safety too. The terrorists chose to attack the capital during the parliament break, and most likely, the media will think that the government’s trying to creating an act. The opposition that think that the money should be allocated to welfare instead of the army realignment plan will stand on the same frontline as the media, and the final responsibility will be pointed at the Settlement Issues Council that has been pushing for the realignment. At this point, if people find out that the princess of Zeon is hidden in the house of the Council chairman…)

The leaders of the military body moved only for body, secretly colluded

with Neo Zeon, and planned a terrorist attack using Islamic militants as a cover-up to help increase the budget of the Federation army's realignment plan—this script that could not be overturned easily immediately flashed through in Ronan's mind, and his held himself from clicking his tongue and closed his eyes. "This is really an impeccable rhetoric you have there. One might even suspect that you're the mastermind here!" Ronan retorted sarcastically, and Martha could not hold back her snicker (The majority of the society only believes in what they hope to believe) as she spoke with a cold tone.

(Everything is a conspiracy set by the Settlement Issues Council. I suppose this story should be an exciting fantasy the foolish public will like, right?)

"Will the secretive Foundation hiding the mysterious "Box" appear in that fantasy?"

(Let's see. If the media is willing to let go of all advertisements related to the Foundation, with Anaheim Electronics first, they'll definitely be able to write a more interesting fantasy.)

Did she expect everything here? Ronan realized that this opponent was not going to be easy as he gave a sigh of realization, "Speaking of the Foundation, I did hear of a rumor." and raised a topic to revive the situation.

"The Senate is currently discussing about reevaluating the laws of societies and foundations. If this bill is passed, the audits for public welfare will be stricter, and the non-profit organizations that exist only in name will be taxed like legal entities. In other words, the idea of taking advantage of a non-taxable privilege to hoard funds for the Foundation won't work. Amongst it, the Foundation may most likely have to disband."

(What has this got to do with the secret organization hiding the "Box"?)

"Of course it has nothing to do with it, but the premise before that is that you must certainly have the "Box" first."

The breath from the other end of the phone vanished, and for the first time, Martha answered back in silence. Ronan was not bluffing; he had prepared countless legal ways to force the Vist Foundation into a corner for this moment. He held his breath and waited for the other party's response, but after several seconds, (I won't let you lead me here.) Martha merely answered coldly.

(Please hand "her" to the Foundation. This will benefit both sides.)

“Leaving aside my side, what benefit will you get?”

(You can think about that. We’ve acquired the mobile suit that’s basically the key to the “Box”. Don’t forget that the benefits and ills of preventing the “Box” from being revealed works for both of us.)

Ronan lost the battle completely in this one. The RX-0 which contained the signals locating the “Box”, the authority over the “Ra Cailum” and all the bargaining chips on the table were in Martha’s hand. It was difficult to deal with the aftermath of the Dakar situation with the power of the Federation government alone. if he did not rely on the power of the Vist Foundation, he would end up causing the government to dissolve. (Please make a decision as quickly as possible.) Martha then spoke in a rhetoric, not even a question, and Ronan let out a heavy sigh.

(Just send her to the “Ra Cailum”. You do know the location of the ship now? It’s where your prince is working hard at now.)

“Yeah, this world is so small. I should ask you not to do anything to my son, shouldn’t I?”

(Why would I? I don’t want to be enemies against you.)

Martha finished this conversation with a thoroughly sarcastic reply and cut the line. Ronan put down the receiver and looked at the sunset that was redder than before, leaned on the back of the leather chair, and sighed.

The neighing of a horse came from the courtyard, and the window trembled slightly. *That’s Pilgrim, right? Riddhe had been riding it around for a while, and once he left, it naturally can’t shake off its excessive vigor;* This was what Dwiyon revealed to Ronan. He looked at the photo hanging on the wall, a photo with Ronan and a 5-year-old beaming Riddhe, and turned to look at the television without sound. A VTR of the disaster that was probably taken by a victim showed a collapsing skyscraper, the dust that loomed, and the people who were unable to evacuate in time. That scene was just like Hell on Earth.

Did Riddhe witness this battlefield too? He, bounded by the destiny of the Marcenas family, and treated his affections for the princess of Zeon as the only solace, did he witness this hell too? Ronan was emotionally-struck by a sense of depression and switched off the television.

After this, Riddhe will experience all sorts of despair again. He will think that his father betrayed him, will harbor hatred where he can’t release it, and will wait for things to develop, but this can’t be helped. I

can only do this to let him and the world he lives for continue to exist. I can only do this to prevent the 100-year-old curse from toppling the world—Ronan closed his eyes silently, let out a sigh, opened his eyes again, and picked up the receiver of the internal phone.

“Bring Miss Mineva Zabi over.”

Part 3[edit]

Night instantly arrived as the sunset hid itself behind the forest ridge. The road with hardly any vehicles passing by on it, let alone pedestrians, was dyed a darkness of night, and a wind that came from seemingly nowhere caused the entire field of black malt to rustle. Looking over, there were no street lights or anything, and there were no signs of any city lights. The only items that seemed to be holdovers from the old age, the telephone poles were extended across the horizon on both paths, leading far away.

It had been more than 3 hours since she followed her plan and escaped from the Marcenas’ residence. She should have reached the city earlier, according to her predictions, but at this point, it did not look

like she was approaching the city anytime soon. She only walked for 7km, but she never expected it to take so much time and energy. The only things that could be used as landmarks were the windmills acting as wind-powered electricity. Mineva Lao Zabi looked far beyond the windmills, and opened up the map she brought from the residence, but found that the surroundings was so dark the words could not be seen, and bit her lips. The map rustled with the wind, and she looked around to inspect her surroundings. There was a worn-out restaurant sign beside the road in front of her that was about to descend into darkness.

It was a cottage-sized diner, a shop that could occasionally be seen in a colony. There was only one car parked at the parking lots in front of the shop, and business did not seem bustling. Mineva peeked through the slightly dirty window to look into the shop, checked that it was seemingly not a gathering of ill-intentioned motorists, and pushed the double hinged doors aside.

She could see only a counter and 6 box seats there, and after looking around, she could not spot a customer or even a shop attendant. “Is it possible to have a meal here?” she asked meekly, and a chair opposite the counter could be heard moving. An old man who was ostensibly the shop owner suddenly poked his head out, and his obviously surprised stare met Mineva’s in the eyes.

The shopkeeper quickly whipped up some greasy fries, a hamburger and a salad with only tomato and lettuce, and again sat on the simple chair opposite the counter. The television set in a corner of the counter was showing the news of the Dakar incident. The incident involved the remnants of Neo Zeon, the Federation army had increased their security, and the thousands of missing—or dead, trapped under the rubble; as she digested on the news broadcaster's words, Mineva silently ate her food. Even after deducting the expenses of the long-distance bus trip from the city, she still had enough money. This money was borrowed from Zinnerman’s bag after she left a message for the latter. She recalled how she hid from the others to search another person’s bag, and thinking about this act she once did pained her as her hairs stood; however, she had already experienced in “Industrial 7” the reality that she could not do anything without money. She considered that since she could only use this little money left, she should not waste even a single coin, and she felt hesitant over the excessiveness of coffee after the meal.

In fact, even if she scrimped on her money, she would not be able to assure her future situation. She had a faint hope that once she reached the city, she would be able to meet with the anti-government

forces and contact Neo Zeon, but she understood that the aftermath of the Dakar incident made her expectations harder to fulfill. In the worst situation, she may be captured by the Federation public security, but it was better than to be tamed by the Marcenas family. She wholeheartedly thought about avoiding being used as a diplomatic bargaining chip or a mean to settle the aftermath of the Dakar incident, and planned this escape while seemingly losing her mind, but had practically no plan on what to do after leaving the residence. Basically, even if she were to meet with someone who could provide her aid, she did not feel that the current Neo Zeon had room for her.

Full Frontal actually let a man like Mahdi Garvey cause rampage on Earth, and most probably, had a hand in this incident. He hasn't obtained the "Box", so why is it that he decided to add fuel to the fire —? She recalled the face with the icy cold mask in her mind, and could not help but clasp her hands. At this moment, a cup filled with coffee was served before her eyes, and after she lifted her head in doubt, she saw the shopkeeper, "Drink up. It's my treat." Who said this.

He did not put up a false smile, and his straightforward attitude wore off Mineva's urge to refuse this hospitality. "Thank you. I'll help myself then." Mineva answered and took a sip of coffee. it was probably expected to her, but it was a nice aromatic cup of coffee.

"I haven't seen you around here before. Where are you from?"

The shopkeeper asked as he cleared up the plate containing the hamburger. Mineva hesitated for a while before pointing her finger upward, and the owner followed her finger as he looked up, replying, "You're a Spacenoid? No wonder I never met you before." He showed a smile, and Mineva showed an honest smile.

"I've been living on this rural land for so long that I almost forgot that there are people living in space. Are you someone who's here to sightsee? There's nothing much to see around here."

"No…to someone living in space, it's a delightful thing to be able to step onto the ground."

"You're referring to Earth's gravity? To people like us, the gravity does inconvenience us in some way. If we can reach space, my feet and waist will more or less feel lighter."

The owner cleared the utensils clearly and wiped his hands on his aged apron. He still looked healthy and strong, but his hands showed the many years of toil and labor. Mineva spotted a young-looking youth who seemed to be the son of the shop owner, dressed in Federation

uniform, on an old photo hanging on the wall, “Have you always been living on Earth, owner?” and tried to ask.

“Yeah, I never left America once ever since I was born. I did go to the orbital path once for a field trip in school when I was young. My wife’s now dead, and I did think of going to space myself…but the money I saved up isn’t enough to pay for the expenses needed to migrate to space.”

“I heard that the Space Migration is still under way, is it not?”

“That thing is like a ship ferrying slaves in the past, set up to ship the illegal residents into space. Unbelievably, it seemed that they knew who didn’t want to go to space too. Someone like me will never be nominated to be moved to space.”

The shop owner laughed with a self-decrying flair as he poured coffee for himself and took a sip. There was no real evidence around, but Mineva could imagine that the son in the photo who set off probably never returned.

“I do feel reluctance about leaving a land I stayed on for many years, but in our era, we heard many tales of the devastation at the end of the old century from our forefathers when we were growing up. There were famines, natural disasters, wars…as bad as it can get. Humanity created the Federation government to escape from that hell, and started to move people to space. Some people said that they were just dumping the poor into space, but many said that they went to space on their own will. They all decided that they would not return to Earth before Earth’s natural environment recovered.”

She had already forgotten about this way of looking at things. The owner did not look at Mineva’s speechless face any further as he turned his sights at the special television program broadcasting the news.

“That Dakar’s just a land people feel will be devoured by the desert within a hundred years. Someone suggested about moving the capital over there after the war, probably to let the officials understand how bad Earth has deteriorated. The natural environment had finally started to recover, but the One Year War caused things to revert to how it was. Some felt that humanity should just move to space entirely and let Earth rest…”

“Are there any people who think this way amongst the Federation government?”

“Yeah, I suppose there was a young and gifted idealist who thought of

it this way too…but even after looking at the reality in Dakar, humanity hasn't changed. The only thing that can be said however is that the desertification is so fast it's completely beyond expectations, and then they moved the capital to that place called Lhasa in Tibet or something. After it was destroyed by the Neo Zeon terrorist attack, those guys returned back to Dakar to rebuild. In the end, Dakar still ended up as a terrorist target. There doesn't seem to be a limit to the worrying here."

"Even if ideals are correct, people's feelings won't follow…we're really hopeless."

"Those are some deep words you're saying, Missy. You seem pretty knowledgeable."

The owner gave a probing expression in his smile. Mineva then realized that she spoke too much and lowered her head.

"But it's not good for a young person like you to view things this way. I guess it's best that you remember that all things start from humanity's good intentions."

"Humanity's, good intentions…?"

"The reason why we built the Federation government, why we carried out the space migration plan, all of this was born from the good intention to save humanity and Earth. Those who wanted to stay on Earth and leave the land they were accustomed to their children did it out of their good intentions too. If the notion of wanting the company to earn money, or that of fulfilling the responsibilities we've been given are good intentions, then the intention to distinguish ourselves and change our families' lives are of course good intentions…"

"But that should be called selfishness. It's that kind of selfishness that ignores everyone else that the Earth—"

"Maybe, but if we deny that good intention, this world is basically darkness."

The owner wet his lips with the coffee and said calmly. Mineva blinked her eyes, ostensibly caught by the flaw in her thinking.

"Some people suppressed their emotions just to work. That God in the East who abandoned his wife and son and left his house…Buddha, was it? I really can't like that guy. I hate that Char who sent an asteroid falling down on us. He said that it was for the sake of Earth, for the sake of humanity, but what he did really caused me to wonder if he actually liked humanity before."

These words rang in Mineva's ears, seemingly tying down the her now. She could not entrust herself to those warm hands, she could not face the embrace that shrouded her, and she, who could not decide on her foundation, was just running away— "Then, what do you think I should do?" She realized the agitation she let out in her question as she looked at the owner face to face.

"Your question can be answered by those sly answers only adults can do. If I know the answer to that question, I won't be here as a small diner boss in such a place here."

The warm smile only an old man could give caused Mineva to relax her pricked nerves. She took a small sigh and gave a light smile.

"I agree with it. Besides, it's a must to understand our own limitations as humans…"

"That's true, but it sure is troublesome to hear you as a young person speak like you saw through everything and gave a brief estimation for others, Missy."

At this moment, the shop owner looked at Mineva right in the eyes and spoke. The latter felt that her cringed self was slapped on the back and gasped.

Right, she was the one who thought that she had seen through everything. She grumbled about the surrounding darkness and cringed, not willing to take the initiative to do anything. She should have known that waiting was not going to work, and light was not going to shine in. "Is that so…you're right." She subconsciously muttered and clasped her hands tightly.

"I escaped outside without being restricted, but I thought that I saw through everything, and couldn't progress on…maybe I'm really just running away…"

The owner frowned with a puzzled look. *What I want to do, and what I have to do—these aren't what I should worry, but rather what I can do now…* as Mineva repeated these thoughts in her mind, she silently muttered to herself, telling herself not to run away anymore. At this moment, the coffee cup suddenly rattled, and Mineva looked up at the ceiling.

The deep buzzing sound became more obvious from above, and she could hear that it was the rotors of a helicopter spinning, causing the vibrations to spread within the shop. As the glass windows and other cutlery started to rattle, the owner did not look away from the ceiling as he muttered, "Has the military decided to patrol around here

too?". *There's nothing to be afraid of.* The moment she made this decision, the other party came to invite her. She gulped down the cold coffee, "Owner", called out and got up from her seat. She placed the dining expenses on the counter and stared right at the owner who stared back at her in utter shock.

"The coffee was tasty. I suppose this trip to Earth was worth this cup of coffee alone."

The spotlights that shone down from the sky dyed the windows inside the shop. The sounds of the vehicles being parked rang continuously, and the sounds of the vehicle doors being opened and closed followed. "You…" the owner spoke as he retreated, and Mineva turned her back to him and faced the diner's doors. Soon after, the double hinged doors were pushed aside, and several men rushed in with killing intent.

These men were dressed in suits, but Mineva could tell that they had pistols in their suits. It was easy of them to capture her back—no, there had to be something for them to invite her back after letting her escape this far. Once she realized this predicament, she met a man in his forties right in the eyes. The man's expression did not waver, "Miss Audrey Burne" as he feigned politeness.

"Chairman Ronan is waiting for you. Please follow us back."

He approached Mineva without revealing any openings, and put his hand on her shoulder. At that moment, the emotions that was vented within Mineva immediately exploded, "How rude." and a sharp voice came from her mouth,

"I'm Mineva Zabi. I have no intention to run away from hide. Make way."

The taller man was ostensibly jolted by electricity as he shook his hand off, took a step back, and nearly tumbled. Mineva bowed to the wide-eyed owner behind the counter, walked towards the door, took a breath, and entered the gathered spotlight.

This is good. My time as Audrey Burne has ended. As the heir to the Zabi family, there are many things I have to face. This realization was gradually settled within Mineva's heart as she let the downwash from the helicopter blow upon her.

Part 4[edit]

"…I have no intention of undermining Londo Bell's independence. However, though you are an external organization, the fact still

remains that you belong to the Federation's space fleet, right? You have to listen to the order of the Senate chairman."

Martha spoke as if she was a customer complaining about faulty goods. Her face, which was abnormally bewitching for her age, brought an overly intense flavor to the otherwise bland Captain's room of the "Ra Cailum". Bright Noa glanced aside to look at his impatient-looking First Officer Meran, "I have no objections to this order." and showed a steeled face as he answered.

"The only thing about my personal doubt is regarding why is it that you, a civilian, had to be the one telling me this."

"Did the Senate Council affirm this with you?"

"Yes. I've received notifications to assist the Vist Foundation's request as much as possible."

"Then, you have to follow orders. Londo Bell's a flower without fruit amidst the tired forces in the chaos after the war. Your responsibility should be over once the space army's reassembled. It should be your responsibility as the commander, Captain Bright, to assign new positions for your subordinates."

"Oh."

"If you're willing to give assistance, I'll naturally pay you back. Currently, I'll use this battleship as a test ship for the UC plan, since the backup machines "Jestas" are gathered here as well….as for what kind of future this will bring upon Londo Bell, I suppose you'll understand."

Martha continued to sit comfortably on the reception sofa as she raised her foot triumphantly again. "Do you understand?" Bright showed no emotion on his face as he tossed this question to Meran, who answered, "I don't." Once he heard his First Officer's confident reply, Bright felt a sense of satisfaction as he looked at Martha, whose hands on the armrests tensed up as she showed some hastiness in her eyes.

"…You're really an old fox. I heard from others that you're a blockhead who doesn't understand about the affairs of the world. I suppose those useless subordinates of mine were completely fooled."

Bright had no intention of denying or admitting this. Martha stared at this tight-lipped man for several seconds before sighing, and said, "Anyway, please listen to our side's instructions." before turning away immediately.

"Let me tell you this beforehand, it's useless to hope for Chairman

Ronan's authority. Things were settled without you knowing, Captain."

I don't have to answer you regarding what you don't know. She conveyed this message silently, frowned, gave a chilling glance, and turned her body, dressed in a violet suit around as she left the Captain's room. Bright immediately relaxed the strength in his shoulders, and Meran realized the sigh he kept within for a long time.

"Good grief…that devil's just like how she's described."

"But she's anxious. That "Gundam" pilot has been keeping quiet whenever he was asked about information regarding the "Box"."

Banagher Links, was it? Bright recalled the face of the boy who was ostensibly the "Gundam" pilot, and released his uniform collar. "What do we do?" Meran asked a meaningful question.

"It seems that her words about Chairman Ronan being controlled aren't just a bluff. If the news about the Dakar incident and the "Box" are revealed, the Senate Council that had been assisting the Vist Foundation all this time won't be able to stand up. The financial world is better than the political world in terms of manipulating the media."

"If things may end up causing a scandal that involves the entire army, the aides supporting the Senate Council can only shut up…is this what you mean?"

"Yes. The Dakar Incident gave the Foundation an unexpected excuse. It doesn't seem like that mobile suit, the "Banshee" was calibrated, but they brought it along too."

He got up from the sofa and switched the monitor panel behind the office table to the external surveillance. At this point, the "Ra Cailum" was docked 20km away offshore from Dakar, and one could still see the trails of dust remaining on the horizon. After two days of confirmation, the number of definite casualties had risen to more than 40,000, and this number continued to increase bit by bit even at this point. The shadows flying about the city were most probably the firefighters and the media. it was said that the relief squads had already deployed helicopters equipped with heat sensors from all over the world, just to find survivors buried under the rubble.

The same situation goes for the inside of the ship, as there was no time to rest. After confirming the casualties, sending in relief aid and doing all sorts of assistance, everyone realized that two days of work had just passed by. However, these seemed to have nothing to do with Martha. It was fine if it was just letting a mobile suit dock with the active squad, but she insisted that the ship was to follow her orders,

and Bright gave an absolutely correct answer, saying that “The law never specified that we can move a government’s properly for private purposes”. She came to the Captain’s room to voice her misgivings, leading to the commotion from before. Since Ronan was exercising his authority as the vice-chairman of the Senate, Martha overruled this by using her authority as the Senate chairman, and he ended up being involved in this childish fight over power he inadvertently got involved in. At the rate this situation continued, perhaps one side would probably use the name of the prime minister?

“The Foundation and the Settlement Issues Council is having a tug-of-war with the Senate Council as the stage…what is that “Laplace Box”, for them to go to this extent?”

All the abnormalities started from that point. “I don’t know.” Bright rubbed his eyes and said as he turned to Meran.

“It seemed that the “Nahel Argama” was chasing the “Box” before the job got handed to us, but…”

“We can’t make contact with them? If they can testify against the ploys by the Foundation and the Senate Council, we may be able to turn the wills of those supporting the Council.”

“That’s a little difficult. The “Nahel Argama” is controlled directly by the Senate Council, and they’re banned from contacting their original regiment. If we resist the order, the command of Londo Bell may be moved by the Senate Council. It’s frustrating, but the fact remains that the space army wants Londo bell dissolved.”

It was just like what Martha pointed out. Londo Bell was a flower without fruit in the organization called the military, fatigued by the internal conflicts after the war—this temporary squad that was built to prevent Neo Zeon from rising again suddenly had a very heavy outsider flair. At this point, when the space army realignment plan was ready, many aides felt endangered by the massive discretionary power Londo Bell was granted. If there was a slight misstep, they would definitely use this chance to raise a large purge. “Besides, it’s not interesting to have the Foundation and the Council fight it out themselves.” Bright continued and sat back on the chair. He clasped his hands and continued to let his thumbs touch as he asked himself, *What shall I do?*

“…Looks like we can only work on our own?”

The answer was already out. Well, I‘ve been living this kind of life all this while. Bright closed his eyes, let out a soft sigh, “Meran”, and lifted

his determined face.

“Contact the *Luio Chamber of Commerce. Don’t use the basic wireless in the ship; send a private mail to them.”*

“The Luio Chamber of Commerce, as in the company based in New Hong Kong…?”

“That’s considered a top-notch company on earth, but it does deal with all sorts of business behind the scenes. There’s someone we can contact. Send the message to the media relations branch, and mark the recipient as “Hayato Kobayashi of the Audhumla”.”

Meran frowned for a short moment, but answered, “I’ll prepare the document” and stamped his heels together; however, he showed a relieved look on his face because there was a decision made. *First, we will have to obtain the correct information, or we won’t be able to think of a plan to escape this ugly political battle. There’s no option of bowing to authority here.* Bright, lost in his thoughts, absent-mindedly stepped into a little ditch—and once Meran left the room, he slumped into his chair and put his eyes upon a deceased’s portrait.

“Don’t you dare laugh!”

Commander Amuro Ray’s photo did not say anything as it showed what looked like a wry smile back at him.

Part 5[edit]

There was also an interrogation room in the battleship. The room that was used to interrogate prisoners or crew that broke the military rules was suspiciously similar to a setting in a movie, but there was a presence that indicated that this was not the case. The room that was 3m wide had a table for interrogating and a table for recording. The recording table had a terminal that was used for quick note-taking, and the interrogating table, naturally, had a moveable desk lamp. It was a piece of equipment used to shine upon the face of the suspect. But even after seeing all these things, he could not feel a sense of realism here.

As for this lack of realism, the fact that his hands were cuffed was a weird thing to him to too. He was interrogated by the Federation army and the Neo Zeon army before this, but both sides only prompted him to tell the truth, confirm the situation with him, and never gave him a vibe that they would raise their voices. This was the first time he was being interrogated for real—no, or rather, this was the first time he remained silent for so long. The handcuff chains that were shorter than he imagined rattled. *It’s the sound of metal,* Banagher Links thought

blankly in his mind, and lifted his face that was less swollen. The interrogator's stoic face could be seen from the other side of the bright desk lamp.

"It's about time that you obey us now, right?"

The man's voice showed a dumbfounded flair rather than anger or anxiousness. If this hulking man's words were to be believed, he was in his forties, and used to be part of an elite squad in the past, the Titans. During the peak of the Zeon purge craze after the war, he used to torture a few suspects to death, and ended up dismissed from the military as a result. After that, this man was employed by the Vist Foundation. Leaving aside whether his words were true or not, his thin lips were showing the cruelty of an officer, and thus, Banagher tried his best to avoid seeing the other man's face.

"Get into the cockpit of the "Unicorn" and bring out the data from the Laplace Program. It's that simple. Just follow what you're told to do, and you can get your freedom. We won't pursue you about getting involved with the military's top secret stuff or that you once assisted Neo Zeon. I feel this condition isn't bad."

The man sat on the chair with his waist tilted down and used his index finger to tap the finger. Banagher predicted what the other party would do next, and quietly gathered strength in his stomach. As he expected, the man kicked the table aside, "TALK!" and yelled, his voice echoing throughout the cramped room.

"If you think that you won't be treated too severely just because you're a kid, you're in for a grave mistake here. In an adult's society, we don't show mercy to anyone we suspect to be an enemy. No matter whether that person is a woman or a child, we will torture thoroughly until the suspect comes clean. You took a military mobile suit on your own, joined the Neo Zeon ranks, and got arrested in flagrante delicto after taking part in the Dakar terrorist incident in the end. There's no room for mercy here. If we hand you over to the military, you'll be in jail for the rest of your life."

Banagher heard the same things the previous day. If one were to link things that way, it was true that they could be explained that way. He, who had no intention of defending himself, turned his face to the man.

"The Neo Zeon cargo ship you rode on has escaped, and now you don't have any place to return to. We are the only ones who can save you here. It's too stupid to give up your life just for this kind of thing."

The man's voice suddenly became gentle, perhaps because he

thought he got what he wanted. *This kind of pampering tone really annoys me, and I'm able to be stubborn till this point.* Banagher thought carelessly as he ignored the man and looked away from him. At this moment, the man slammed the table hard and yelled,

"WHO ARE YOU KEEPING THIS SECRET FOR!? YOU LITTLE—"

"That's enough."

Another voice could be heard, and the man shut up. The man sitting at the recording table got up, and his stout and fat body appeared amidst the light.

"Leave here for a moment. I want to talk with him for a while."

Alberto Vist's face was shown from bottom to top, and his body showed an unnerving shadow as he looked down at Alberto. The man clicked his tongue and glared angrily at Banagher for a while before he got up, walked by Alberto, and went pass the door of the room. The "Ra Cailum" had in practice become a personal ship for the Vist Foundation, so there was no crew member around for the questioning. The interrogation itself was not carried out by an officer, so naturally, there wouldn't be a timekeeper accompanying. Once the man left, Banagher and Alberto were the only two people left inside. Of course, the men of the Foundation should be keeping their eyes wide as they as they look inside the monitor room through the camera through the camera on the ceiling.

Banagher had a vague feeling that the reason why he felt a bit mindful was because there was a hidden gravity linking him and Alberto. This man had the same father as him—and at this point, this was the only thing he knew of. He toyed with this relationship that seemed so surreal to him in his mouth, and looked back at Alberto's face right in front of him. Just like their meeting on the "Nahel Argama", Alberto's collar was flipped slightly out of his obviously tight collar, and turned his blue eyes at Banagher.

"You're protecting this secret for Cardeas Vist…your father?"

The back of Alberto's chair let out a creaking sound before he slowly spoke up. *Is that the case?* Banagher pondered for a while, but before he could answer, he looked away from the other man.

"You're really amazing. You have a strong will, you have guts, and even the sense of piloting the "Unicorn" is gifted to you. It seems that the Laplace Program's data can't be extracted without your neurowaves. Even if we tie you down to the cockpit, nobody else can read the data as long as you don't agree. When did you learn how to

operate it like that?”

Banagher himself was not sure. When Alberto barged into the cockpit, his first immediate thought was to switch off, and did not react because he understood the system. “Seriously, you’re made too perfectly.” Alberto sighed as he put his elbows on the table.

“You give the look like you don’t understand anything, but you’re always in the center of everything. The situation’s changed according to your will; you’re just like a natural king here, so perfect that it feels disgusting. What was unsealed might not be the Laplace Program, but you.”

These words were unexpected and ominous. Banagher inadvertently looked up, and Alberto seized this opportunity as his fat cheeks sneered.

“Don’t you find it weird? You’re too perfect already. As expected of an enhanced human Cardeas created.”

“Enhanced…human?”

Perhaps you’re the same kind as me.—Marida’s voice, which he heard some time before, suddenly awoke deep within his ears, and he felt goosebumps all over him. “Am I wrong?” Alberto said as his sneer intensified.

“When you were in the Vist family, I was in a boarding school, so I don’t know how Cardeas raised you, but…you said before that you don’t have any memories of that time, right?”

That was something Banagher let slip from his mouth the previous day. He again turned his silent stare at Alberto.

“Perhaps you feel that you sealed your own memories. But do you feel that an ordinary person can do this? If your talent wasn’t spotted by Cardeas, and if you were trained before you were matured—”

“THAT’S NOT THE CASE!”

He yelled out to shake off the chill, and the sound overpowered the sounds of the air-conditioning and the machine, rumbling the air within the room. Banagher did not look at Alberto’s face as the latter twitched his eyebrows, and instead stared at his hands that were handcuffed.

“Whenever I think about the past…about dad, mom, I’ll feel sad…that’s why I told myself to keep forgetting about them, forget about everything, until I really could not think of anything…that’s all.”

“If you’re able to forget your past just like that, it’s proof that you’re not ordinary. You’re an Cyber-Newtype created by Cardeas.”

“No! You’re wrong! The relationship between parent and child isn’t like that! If that’s the case, aren’t you a human created by Cardeas too?”

Alberto gasped and muttered, “What…” as his face looked sinister. Banagher stared right back at him in the eyes.

“The one entrusting, the one being entrusted…it’s because we’re father and son that we can love or hate, right? I can’t live like we don’t have any relation to each other, si I…”

Banagher swallowed the latter half of his words and he looked down. *That’s why I can seal my memories too, and that’s why I can even recognize him as my father in such a short time, and got bounded down by his last words. This isn’t about theory, this isn’t about my own specifications. This troublesome thing called blood relations isn’t something that can be cleared through knowledge alone* — “So, what are you trying to say?” Alberto uttered these words and turned his impatient face to the side.

“What parent and son, what blood relations…those are just biological definitions. There are still other things humans have to protect first.”

Alberto got up after saying these words, ostensibly trying to convince himself. *This isn’t something he understood from his heart.* Banagher instinctively sensed this as he looked at the back of Alberto’s pudgy body.

“What’s the so called “Laplace Box”? It’s an order. The world’s rules can continue to run with the secret beliefs in this “Box”. It’s like a common delusion, an existence that guards people from their selfishness. Once we lose it, the Vist Foundation will not be the only thing that can’t continue. The gears running the world up till now will lose control too. The Dakar incident was one proof of this. If Cardeas never intended on opening the “Box”, that incident would never have happened. After the chaos of the One Year War, we learned the tactics on how to control war.”

The shadow formed by the lamp caused the slightly arched back to look heinous. *That’s the back of someone scared of something.* This thought flashed through Banagher’s mind as he recognized this.

“After this, the organizations under the name of Zeon will be annihilated entirely, actual aliens will be the only enemies left for the Federation, and the situation won’t change. There is an instinct to fight within humans; as long as society continues to rely on the differences

in hierarchy, wars will never disappear from the world. Even if we don't deliberately scatter these seeds, humans can still find any excuses for war, whether they're tensions in governments or occasional battles. Gears to drive the economy, a catharsis that can purge the instinct to fight; without these two factors, humans will continue to start full-scale worlds. This is a symptom of ill-management of humanity, and it's impossible to cure them. We can only think of ways to live with our bad habits."

If there's a society where war is regulated, where we believe that terrorism and grudges can be managed, won't we end up subduing people's hearts. Won't we end up creating more people like Mahdi Garvey? Banagher thought subconsciously, but he did not say it out. Alberto again returned to the chair facing him, and his eyes that were looking right at Banagher had a dull glint in them.

"Do you understand? We don't view war as our food. It's because of the Foundation and Anaheim controlling war that humans can avoid the fate of destroying each other after the wars, and managed to hang on. Cardeas however wanted to break this order, and you're helping him to break it. Your father's shadow buried within your heart is driving you and the "Unicorn". Think about it carefully. What's the point of protecting this secret for Cardeas' sake? Even if a kid like you leaves the "Box" alone, there won't be any benefit. You'll just cause misfortune to everyone around you. You better treat this as a final advice from a blood relative—"

"Where is Miss Marida?"

Banagher let a voice so calm even he was surprised by, and was unable to speak. At this point, Alberto looked like he was taken aback in a critical area as he immediately looked away. Banagher however continued to stare at him and ask, "Miss Marida should be with you on Earth. Where is she now?", and the latter suddenly gave a fidgety look as he looked back, "This has nothing to do with you." sounding vague as he answered.

"Instead of talking about this, you should be understanding your own situation here—"

"I am thinking…! But is this something that I can decide with my own mind, right? I guess not, right?"

He subconsciously moved his hand and tapped the bottom of the table, creating a deep sound from below. Alberto cringed his body back slightly and turned his suspicious and fearful look back at Banagher.

“Up till now, the many people who got involved with me…including those who helped me, those who fought against me to the death, they all helped me become who I am. Even Cardeas…even dad, he’s just one of them.”

Banagher gritted his teeth and reached his tightly clenched fists onto the table. The chain of the handcuff let out a hard sound, and caused a slight tremor in the dim space of the interrogation room without a trace.

“Even now, I can sense that Miss Marida is somewhere nearly. She’s not the only one though; Audrey, Ensign Riddhe, Captain, Miss Loni, Mr Daguza, I can feel them too…I’m frustrated about this, but even you are someone I can sense. I have to find an answer everyone can accept before I can make a decision for the “Box”. That’s because I…”

Have to fulfill my responsibility—“I have to do this.” This line alone caused him to be bound together with others. That foreign sense spread within his heart, and he barely managed to swallow the latter half of his words as a result. *In the end, is this line something I realized in my heart?* Banagher gathered his consciousness in a corner of my temples, but he did not sense *that pulsation*. Once he affirmed that this was definitely his thought, he tried to think about that question again. *What is myself?*

An individual unit can’t accomplish anything, and this unstable existence definitely can’t form words. He can only relate with his parents, with others, before he can build his own self existence as he knows the world…or rather, “discover” it. If that were the case, the way I can feel everyone entering my heart isn’t a hallucination here, but that my original self won’t be killed off like this. What’s resonating and changing is the existence called “self”, and this sense that continues to expand may be the real nature behind Newtypes.

That’s why dad never told me to what I should do, but told me to do what I feel I have to do before entrusting me the “Unicorn”. He also entrusted the possibility of human change in me—but what if these souls I can feel can be adjusted by human means…? *As he continued to think about things in a roundabout way, Banagher shuddered with fear and clasped his trembling fists together. Alberto turned his silent stare on the other party for a while and muttered, “That’s the curse binding you…just like the brainwashing of a Cyber-Newtype. How pitiful.” He did not look at Banagher in the eyes as he got up from his seat.*

“Well, whatever. Even if you aren’t willing, you’ll be forced to comply anyway. Try and find those things you deem as answers before that moment arrives.”

These assured remarks caused Banagher's hairs to stare. He gave a suspicious look back at Alberto for a moment, and the latter proceeded to reach his hand for the door.

"Really. You're designed too perfectly. It's really annoying."

He gave a piercing glance before stepping through the door. The door panel that closed up immediately let out an abnormally loud sound, causing Banagher's body and mind to let out a jerk as he remained alone in the dim room. He put his clasped hands on his table and slumped weakly on the table. Alberto's shoulder figure still remained in his eyes, and Banagher felt tormented that the impression Alberto gave him was not completely dissimilar to Cardeas.

Part 6[edit]

(…We can count ourselves lucky to be able to get back a single "Zee Zulu". The incident in Dakar caused all the patrol fleets roaming around the colonies to gather on Earth's orbit. The "Garencieres" has to leave Earth as soon as possible and leave the absolute defense zone until the preliminary stage is set up.)

The intensity of the scattered Minovsky particles was set at a very low level, but the communication feed of the ship as it moved through the atmosphere was still very bad. Due to the static, the expression on Full Frontal's face, shown on the console's communication monitor, was less visible than usual. Suberoa Zinnerman felt the plaster at the end of his eyes tighten, "Yes…" and answered. He could tell that Alec and Flaste, seated on the steering seat and navigation seat respectively, were pricking their ears from behind their seats.

(The Federation has increased their surveillance frequency, and this communication signal may be tapped on. Please tell me the new coordinates data you received from the Psyco Monitor, captain.)

"The "Unicorn" has fallen into the Federation's hands. I suppose the enemy has already known this new information."

(Despite so, the "Ra Cailum" that reclaimed the "Unicorn" seems to be moving very slowly. It seems that there was a mishap that caused them to lose this new information. Currently, luck still remains on our side.)

The lips below the mask showed a twisted smile as Frontal concluded. He, who gathered the Neo Zeon fleet, was looking down at the commotion on Earth from his flagship, the "Rewloola". It seemed that the report from the Zeon supporters who got into the political world had already reached his ears at the first moment. Once the Vist

Foundation, currently on the “Ra Cailum”, use more of their political power to force the high ranking government officials to submit, the more information would be leaked through the political route. Besides, those Senators who once benefited from the Garvey Enterprise’s business dealings were being investigated privately, and as nobody knew when they would be pursued to take responsibility, there was a tense atmosphere permeating throughout. Without know what kind of changes there would be the next day, people would start to talk due to this restlessness. Whether the entire Federation army finished sorting out their investigations, it probably would not be hard for the “Garencieres” to force an escape route out.

But to Zinnerman, this currently was not an important thing. It had been 2 and a half day since that incident, and the Federation military’s security on all of Earth’s ground was already elevated to combat level. The Zeon forces everywhere were already being shut down, and at this point, it was not just one or two guerilla groups being eliminated. Even the “Garencieres” had to hide from the satellite surveillance in the skies above the Euro-Asia continent before finally managing to establish contact with the “Rewloola”. The amount of fuel they had left was less than 3 days’ worth, and since there was no place left for them to resupply, they had no choice other than to retreat back to space with their tails between their legs. However, from the conversation he had with Frontal, Zinnerman managed to hear out on any other possible related information.

The “Rewloola” in space did not receive the relay signal from the Psyco Monitor. In other words, at this point, only the “Garencieres” had the coordinates data indicated by the “Unicorn”—Zinnerman kept his face from showing the hint of this possibility on his face as he met Frontal in the eyes through the monitor. “Then, it doesn’t matter even if we leave the “Unicorn” alone?” He asked with an emotionless expression on his face.

(Of course, we’ll send other people to grasp its whereabouts. We can’t be sure that the data from the “Unicorn” will be intercepted. I have already prepared other ships with Psyco Monitors to follow in place of the “Garencieres”. You just have to consider bringing the information back.)

Was I seen through? The ostensibly deliberate reminding voice caused Zinnerman to have this fleeting doubt, and he let loose of all other thoughts as he looked back at Frontal again. He gripped onto the Captain’s armrest that would not be shown on the monitor, “May I ask you about something?” and cautiously asked.

(What is it?)

“Why did you choose to support Mahdi Garvey’s battle?”

Flaste and Alec both turned their faces around in surprise from behind the console, but Zinnerman merely continued to look at Frontal on the monitor. (Are you unhappy about it?) the masked face asked, “No”, and Zinnerman responded, giving a looking indicating that he was the one asking the question.

(That truly wasn’t a wise operation.) After two, three seconds of silence, Frontal answered quietly. (If the fact that Neo Zeon took part in this operation was revealed, the losses on our side will surely be significantly. However, Captain, the Federation had never taken this much damage since the asteroid drop 3 years ago. What I want to see is how defiant the public is against the Federation.)

“The public…against the Federation?”

(Leaving aside the Spacenoids, there are also Zeon followers amongst Earthnoids. However, they could only declare their unhappiness by showing their anti-establishment. What will happen of those people see the one-sided brutal massacre on Neo Zeon’s side? What exactly will be the response when those people hear the news that it’s not a colony or an asteroid being dropped, but a massacre where humans can be heard screaming from close range…? I hope to use this chance to be sure by using the “Descendant of Dubai” as a cushion of the impact. This is to help determine the new direction for Neo Zeon once we get the “Laplace Box” in the future.)

The thin smile under the mask resonated with Mineva’s voice as she said, *“He’s a dangerous man”*. At this moment, Zinnerman felt a certain tense emotion breaking within him, and the balance that was swaying side to side had tilted to one side. “I see. Understood.” he kept a still expression as he answered. Frontal’s eyes under the anti-glare filter let loose a probing expression, (I’ll await your return), and he disappeared from the monitor.

This was already within Zinnerman’s expectations, but the masked face had already thrown aside the guilt from its conscience and its hesitation, showing no signs of remorse at all—and even brazenly in front of his subordinates that he was experimenting with public opinion in such a mocking tone. He felt a very indifferent chill rather than fatigue, and clasped his hands together as he leaned on the back of the captain’s seat. “Is this okay?” Flaste asked with a meaningful smile.

“You don’t look pleased at all, captain.”

“You’re the one who said that you want to know what Frontal’s hiding, not me, right?”

Zinnerman glared back, and Flaste shrugged as he turned forward. Alec moved his large body that even the steering seat could not fit as he looked at Zinnerman and asked, “Then , what do we do now?”. The latter closed his eyes, called back the thoughts he suppressed only a moment again, “Change our course.” and declared with his tone being that of a captain.

“True bearing 182. Avoid the sights from the satellites and move to the south Pacific.”

Alec blinked his eyes in surprise, showing doubt, and Flaste beside him was tapping at his fingers, looking like if he expected this. if they were planning to mouth above the equator in order to fly into space, he would not mention the Pacific when he gave this command. “Aren’t we going back to space?” Alec asked, but Zinnerman did not look at him as he looked over at the clouds outside the window in front of him.

“We haven’t saved the princess and Marida yet; we can’t leave just like this.”

“But, our fighting strength alone—”

“You want to go back?” Flaste glared at Alec, seemingly ready to chastise the latter by saying, *You really don’t know anything.* “The Captain never mentioned anything about the Princess, let alone Marida.”

Are you serious? On realizing this, Alec gasped, and his originally suspicious stare at Zinnerman became one of reluctance as he turned his head to the front. It did not matter whether they could do it or not. Ever since the end of the First Neo Zeon War, the “Garencieres” had been protecting Mineva during the rocky times, and to them, the option to leave her behind and return to the “Sleeves” base never existed. There were a lot of things in Zinnerman’s mind that he could not part away from; Mineva, Marida and the “Unicorn” that was the equivalent of the key to the “Box”. “There’s always an order of priority to things”, he said as he scratched his hard beard on his chin.

“It’s true that we can’t do anything now. Right now, all the government organizations have upped their security.”

“Then…”

“Let’s get back the “Unicorn”.”

Zinnerman's determined tone caused Alec to turn his speechless face around. "We can use that as a trade bait to the Federation for the Princess and Marida. Since they don't have the data on the "Box", this works for us." Zinnerman continued, and Flaste whistled at him as he answered,

"Sounds good. This is how the Garencieres team move. However, it'll be hard to take action on the "Ra Cailum"."

"This is worth a shot. Tell Tunick to focus on the satellite feed, and don't miss out on any of the "Ra Cailum"s actions."

They're like us here, they can't possibly be flying forever. If we focus on their movements, we'll definitely get a change to take action. First, we have to gather our fighting strength. Zinnerman thought as he summoned the map of the South Pacific sea charts on the monitor. "What do we do with the brat?" and then, he heard Alec's question.

"Of course we're going to get them all. That package's worth more here, right captain?"

And just like before, when both of them were sitting and fighting with their stares, Flaste said this with a meaningful look in his heads. Zinnerman recalled Banagher Links eyes that were etched in his, and made an unhappy frown on his still swollen face, "Depends on the situation." as he briefly replied. Flaste gave a bitter smile on his face and retreated behind the back of the navigation seat. soon after the order to change navigation path was made, the sea of clouds outside the window started to flow sideways quickly.

The "Garencieres" turned its triangular prism ship shape around as it drew a wide arc above the clouds and quickly moved to the southern sea. The ship looked as fast as ever as it escaped the perimeter set by the "sleeves", and the sun that was dazzling radiantly was the only thing watching over their whereabouts.

Part 7[edit]

The large body of the black "Unicorn", kept within the hangar, looked like it was able to shake the air around it, and the demonic presence it gave was reminiscent of an ancient Eastern demonic sword. Like the "Unicorn" lined beside it, the hangar was surrounded with rope preventing entry, and the specifically designated guards from the Vist Foundation were the ones surrounding them. The rumors that they were still undergoing adjustments seemed to be true, as there were sensors attached to the gondola at the abdomen, and a large number of cables were snaking out from the cockpit. Instead of saying that it

was maintenance, it was probably more apt to call it an ‘experiment’. Sub-Lieutenant Watts Stepney looked up at it, “I heard it’s called the “Banshee”.” and nonchalantly said.

“It’s the second unit of the white guy, tested under gravitational conditions. The ones being beside the machine all day seem to be the members of the Augusta Newtype Research Institute.”

“Newtype research? Wasn’t that sealed up long ago?”

Sub-Lieutenant Nigel McGusiness, who had been listening beside, asked back. At this moment, “It’s because it’s not sealed that those guys are here.” Watts answered, seemingly believing in not thinking too much with regards to unexpected situations. Lieutenant Nigel Garrett stood beside both of them as he leaned on the handrail of the catwalk, and after seeing his handsome face, Riddhe held in his sigh as he looked at the “Banshee”. He could see the two Unicorn-type mobile suits lined on the wall opposite from the catwalk inside the mobile suit deck.

It seemed that the mobile suit deck of the “Ra Cailum” was over its capacity as it was docked with the 12 “Jestas” it could contain , the “Delta Plus” and the two “Unicorns”. It was possible to contain these machines only by using the overhaul space deep within the bow and the rear deck that was used for staring the Base Jabbers. The back of the deck was used to store the transport carrier of the “Banshee”, the “DO-DAI”, which took up a lot of space. In the end, the contingent from the Vist Foundation showed no regards for anyone else, and even set up a forbidden entry zone in a corner of the deck. It was to be expected that Nigel and the other original crew were to feel repulsed by it. The mechanics moving around would show looks of hidden motives, and the atmosphere within the ship was as unfriendly as it could deck.

If there was work, they could at least distract themselves, but the “Delta Plus”, which overexerted itself during the previous battle, was moved to the overhaul space, and the assigned chief mechanic, Sergeant Hanna, was currently carrying out full disassembly. Until the unit became humanoid, there was nothing Riddhe could do, and he could only give a glum look together with the Tri-Stars and stare at the unique machines with lone horns. *I should have brought the model along,* he carelessly thought about this out of a sudden. He could not contact his father who seemed to be on his way to Dakar, and could not meet Banagher, confined within the ship, as he wanted to. He could not do anything, and did not know his situation. *Might as well turn my back on everything—*

“Haven’t you heard of anything, lord Ensign?”

The burly Watts did not realize Riddhe’s feelings at all as he gave a gruff voice befitting his body build. “About those white and black mobile suits, are they not related to the orders the Senate Council gave you directly?”

“I don’t know. Those guys really annoy me too.”

“And you have the cheek to say that. Isn’t there an order in the ship to secure that white gy?”

“I heard that it launched from a Neo Zeon ship. Didn’t your “Delta Plus” work with it to defeat that mobile armor? It’s really too unbelievable to hear you say that you don’t know know anything.”

Daryl too followed up on this conversation. Riddhe withstood the urge to click his tongue as he looked back at both of them. “Is that the mobile suit in the UC plan?” but Nigel interrupted, causing Riddhe’s heart to race.

“It’s written on the shoulder.”

Nigel leaned beside the handrail as he pointed his chin, and Riddhe looked over at where he pointed. Over there, the words “Project UC” were clearly indicated on the right shoulder armor of the “Unicorn”. Daryl casually added on, “Ah, that’s true.” And Riddhe slumped onto the wall weakly.

“If it’s designed to fight with this guy, then there’s a reason for the extremely high specs o the “Jestas”. Most likely, they’re meant to move beside this guy and clear up all the small fry while this guy charges right at the enemy’s core…like a Newtype controlling Psycommu weapons, for example.”

After hearing Nigel’s plausible deduction, “What, now we’re its prey?” Watts grumbled as he twisted his lips, while Daryl said, “That’s not right, isn’t it? We were planned to be the test pilots for this thing.” *How much has Nigel observed regarding this?* The Tri-stars captain merely spoke calmly, “It might be a good thing we aren’t the test pilots.” as he did not pay heed to Riddhe’s probing glance from beside.

“This guy’s mobility isn’t normal when it transforms into a “Gundam”. A normal pilot probably won’t last 5 minutes in it. It’s impossible to design it to such a ridiculous extent if it wasn’t planned to be piloted by Cyber-Newtypes in the first place.”

“Cyber-Newtypes…” Daryl’s face suddenly turned pale as he muttered this. “With those guys from the Newtype research institute around, I

guess you're right." Nigel however said nonchalantly; Riddhe followed his stare and looked at the cockpit from the cockpit. He could see a human silhouette in full black pilot suit from between the gaps formed by the sensors on the gondola. The pilot's appearance was covered by the helmet visor that was pulled down, but the slender figure could be distinguished from the pilot suit. The pilot looked weak, but the physical body was giving off a certain hardiness, reminiscent of a puppet with a spring inside.

Is that a woman? Riddhe looked at that machine-like pilot's body, and as he leaned his body over the handrail, there was a short and stout man with a contrasting figure there, blocking his sights. It seemed that Alberto sensed Riddhe's stare as he gave an antagonistic glare as he put his hand on the pilot's shoulder and brought her into the cockpit. Riddhe originally thought that he was merely a high-ranking person in the Anaheim Electronics company, but he was an important member of the Vist Foundation. That man, who boarded the ship with the chairperson called Martha, had taken the ship and the "Unicorn" as his personal property. *What in the world is dad doing now?* Riddhe grumbled deep within his heart. *He let the people of the Vist Foundation interrupt, so why hasn't he given me any instructions yet? This is a chance to snatch the "Box" from the Foundation and release the world from the 100 year curse. I abandoned everything and came here in order to pay for the Marcenas' sin—*

"You mean that if we end up becoming this thing's pilot, we might end up being enhanced…?"

Watts whispered as he looked at the back of the pilot who disappeared behind the cockpit hatch. There was already a rumor amongst pilots that a Cyber-Newtype was a synonym of being a vegetable. *Then what about Banagher?* Riddhe pondered, and then shook off this question without an answer before it exploded his head, and lifted his head at the sound of a machine being activated as it rang throughout the deck. The large shutter leading to the aft landing deck was opening slowly.

The air became wind due to the difference in air pressure, and it flowed into the gap of the shutter that was being opened. As Nigel's slightly long hair swayed with the wind, Riddhe, who was standing beside him, spotted a small jet on the other side of the shutter. The moveable jet engines below the wings stood vertically, and the machine that was being towed in by a tractor unit entered the mobile suit deck.

"That's a civilian craft."

"Seriously. We sure have a lot of guests coming in."

Watts and Daryl looked dumfounded as they commented, while Nigel continued to give an unceremonious observing look. Riddhe felt shocked as he too looked down at the approximately 10m long mini jet. The mini jet stopped in the middle of the deck with mobile suits overlooking it on both left and right side, and the mechanics immediately ran towards it. the wheels stopped, and once the hatch on one side of the jet opened, Riddhe could see men in black suits walking down the ladder, before a familiar face followed as it appeared in his sights.

“Mineva…?”

Riddhe nudged aside his heart, which was beating loudly as he bent half his body over the handrail. He could see a proud-looking girl flanked by men in suits on both front and back as she walked down the ladder. *Why is she here?* He felt dizzy as his blank mind suddenly had this thought. *She should be at home. I came here to ensure her safety. Why is she showing herself here? Why is she looking so tense? It’s like she was forcefully brought here—*

“AUDREY! AUDREY BURNE!”

The fact that Riddhe did not call out Mineva’s name here proved that his sanity was still functioning at least. By the time he realized it, Riddhe had already yelled out, and was starting to wave at the mini-jet parked approximately 50m away from the aft. This alone however wasn’t enough for him, and he immediately rushed out. “What’s going on?” “Is she someone he knows?” he left behind Watts and the rest as he dashed to the end of the catwalk. He could identity Mineva’s chestnut-colored from the back of the “Jesta” fastened on the hangar, her appearance clearly etched in his eyes.

Why must you come here? You can’t stay here? There’s a malicious intent to make use of you swirling here! Riddhe poked his body from the end of the catwalk, “AUDREY!” but his voice was gone with the wind. He could not bring himself to waste any time further by clicking his tongue as he immediately dashed off to the nearest airlock. If he wanted to move from the catwalk to the deck, he would have to first return back inside the ship, move through the passages, ride the elevator or use the ladder. The ship’s construct that was designed for zero gravity use had never made him as spiteful as this moment.

Part 8[edit]

Mineva suddenly sensed someone calling out for her, and lifted her head.

The mobile suit deck for any ship that was built looked all too similar. In this wide space, approximately 30m in height and 50m in width, the mobile suits docked in the hangar were lined up like Buddha statues. A lot of the machines' paint was worn off, probably because they were involved in quite a few actual combat situations, and the welding sparks could be seen scattered. She could immediately tell that they were Federation mobile suits, machines with chiseled shoulders standing beside each other, and the emotionless eyes covered with goggles were staring at the wall over it.

Am I thinking too much here? Mineva looked around, and let out a soft sigh. At this moment, a foreign looking object appeared in her sight, causing her to stop. At the only area where a perimeter was set up, the spotlight was on the horn of a certain mobile suit's forehead, dazzling brightly—

"A black "Unicorn"…?"

There was a golden horn atop the pitch black shiny armor, and Mineva could not find any other appropriate vocabulary to describe it. Right beside it was the familiar white "Unicorn", lined side by side with it, and the facemask giving off a certain regal presence was facing the space opposite it. the reason why it looked more slender as compared to the first impression was most probably because of the overly savage look of the black "Unicorn". The pitch black machine with golden ornaments on the armor gave it an appearance beyond that of rigor. Unlike the "Unicorn", which had a certain comforting harmonic feeling to it, it gave a feeling of indifference, not willing to communicate with anyone. it was most likely that they originated from the same place, and these two machines that could be called sister units actually looked so different…

Since the "Unicorn" is here, Banagher should be somewhere inside this ship, right? Mineva again looked around, only to be greeted by a female voice, "Welcome, Your Highness Mineva Zabi." She turned her face around, and found a middle-aged woman dressed in violet suit standing right in front of her, with several men awaiting behind her.

"I'm the substitute leader of the Vist Foundation, Martha Vist Carbine. The long journey has certainly been tough on you."

The woman said this as she bowed politely; however, her condescending expression was completely different from her tone. *This is the daughter of the Vist family who married into the Anaheim Electronics chairman's family, and if I remember correctly, she should be Cardeas' little sister.* Mineva recalled the information that was investigated before she left Neo Zeon, and at this moment, the woman who called herself Martha took a step forward slowly, her

thick perfume scent teasing Mineva's nose.

"You're really young and pretty. This is the inside of a battleship, but please relax, Your Highness, we'll ensure your personal safety."

"Does Senator Ronan Marcenas know about this?"

Once she was brought back to the mansion, Mineva did not have the chance to meet Ronan at all as she was jettisoned off to the plane and sent all the way here. She knew that the jet was sent over from the Vist Foundation, but she did not know what sort of dealing Ronan had with the Foundation, and she did not know the reason why she was brought onto this Federation ship at all. She realized that she did not know the name of this ship at all when she spoke up cautiously. "Of course." However, Martha answered, her deliberate smile not wavering at all.

"We're moving with the same objective as Senator Ronan. This should be your wish itself too, Your Highness."

"My wish…?"

"We want to seal the "Laplace Box"."

Mineva could not help but gulp, and Martha, upon witnessing this, turned her lips that were coated lightly with lipstick into a smile. "I heard that you left Neo Zeon for this reason, Your Highness. I can assure you that the "Box", which will bring about disaster, will be set aside in a place nobody in the Foundation can touch, whether it was, is, or is to come."

Martha's gestures were indicating that this was an act, and when she bowed, her stare looked up at Mineva. *This woman is dangerous.*—the latter's instincts were yelling, making her body tense as she clenched her fists tightly.

Part 9[edit]

(…I heard that the "Box" key is left to that "Unicorn". Have you detained its pilot?)

(Yes. He's currently resting inside the infirmary.)

Just when Banagher thought that the air trembled suddenly, a familiar voice immediately echoed in his ears. His body that was lying on the bed immediately bounced up, and he turned around to look at the communication panel that was suddenly lit.

This place, which was used as a detention room, seemed that it was originally a personal room for officers, and there was a 10 inch monitor

set up beside the bed. On see the figure of the voice's owner, Banagher felt his gulp become a vomit.

(The infirmary? Is he wounded?)

(The boy's fine. He's just a civilian who ended up riding on the "Unicorn" out of coincidence, but he certainly has the talent to pilot and guts. If you wish, I can arrange for you to meet him after this.)

An unfamiliar woman's voice interrupted, (Sorry to bother you about this.) and Audrey answered back before stepping forward again. The hidden camera that was installed on a certain person's chest was moving after her, and her chestnut-colored hair was swaying on the monitor. The scenery shown was definitely the mobile suit deck of the "Ra Cailum", and she, Audrey Burne, was aboard this battleship. "AUDREY!" Banagher yelled as he reached his hand for the intercom button of the communication panel. He continued to press the unresponsibe button, "IT'S ME, BANAGHER!" and yelled at Audrey on the monitor.

"NO, AUDREY! YOU MUSTN'T REMAIN HERE! AUDREY!"

Audrey walked off without turning back, and the Vist Foundation's subordinates surrounded her, sheltering her back that was covered with a white blouse. Banagher punched the monitor, leaped off the bed and rushed to the bedroom. "SOMEONE! OPEN THE DOOR! LET ME OUT!" He slammed the locked door hard and yelled.

After a few slams , the sound of the lock being opened rang, and the automatic door swung aside. Banagher instinctively backed away, saw the man's face standing behind the door, and was startled, rooted to the floor."

"I said it before. Even if you're unwilling, you'll have to cooperate one way or another."

Alberto did not look away as he walked into the room. Banagher turned to look at Audrey on the monitor, before looking back at Alberto again, "Don't tell me…" and eked out a trembling voice.

"You came all the way here, riding on the "Unicorn", in order to save her. Then, you should now cooperate with us to save her."

"You're despicable!"

"Whatever you say. We can only do this in our positions."

There were Vist subordinates looking inside the room, standing behind Alberto, ostensibly blocking off all exits. *I caused everything here—*

once he had this realization, Banagher felt his knees tremble, “Let me speak with Mr—Ensign Riddhe!” he said out the thought he suddenly had.

“That man definitely won’t agree with this doing. Audrey should be protected by his family now…!”

“It’s useless. We’ve already struck a deal with the Marcenas’ family. Her Highness Mineva will be taken care of by the Foundation.”

“What did you say!? Is this something adults should be doing!?”

“Yeah. Thanks to brats like you messing around, the adults certainly suffered quite a bit. You have to empathize with us here.”

Alberto’s firm stare that was different from before caused Banagher’s legs to tremble as he was speechless. The former looked back at the latter, “Since we share the same blood, I’ll just give you one advice.” and continued,

“Cardeas’ father, our grandfather, was killed by our great-grandfather, the leader of the Foundation. Do you know what this means?”

Alberto continued to force this smile on his lips as he brought his face over to Banagher. The latter was pushed back, deep inside the room, and sat on the bed.

“This is the Vist bloodline. In this cursed bloodline, you and I are both just pedestrians. Give up on the naïve thinking that we’re relatives. Even father and son have to kill each other, and the Vist family will kill even their own kind to protect the “Box”.”

The stare of someone who once killed his father was looking down at Banagher in a twisted way. At that moment, a certain emotion that was forced to its limits let out a creaking sound, and he felt his chest cool down immediately. “Hand over the data of the Laplace Program. You’ll get your freedom, and she’ll be saved.” Alberto spoke to exert pressure, and Banagher, who looked back at those bloodshot eyes, lowered his face and nodded slightly before he understood what he was doing.

Alberto heaved a sigh of relief, “Oi” and once called out at the door, Banagher could sense the former taking a step back. The three men on the passage walked into the room, and the feet clad in black leather shoes entered his eyes. He could see one of them taking out handcuffs and raised his hands. Once that man closed in, Banagher got up and used the momentum to send a headbutt into the man’s belly before his hands were grabbed.

The man groaned as he was sent flying back. Alberto, who caught him from behind, fell back on his backside, and the black-clad Foundation subordinates were in disarray. He darted below a subordinate who immediately leaped forward, lowered his head, and charged towards the exit before rushing out of the room in a forward lunge. “You…!” as Alberto growled , Banagher shut the door intently.

Banagher did not have time to lock the door. “Oi, hold it!” an angry growl rang through the corridor, and the guards with white gun holsters on their waists were pursuing right after him. However, he continued to run, and he followed his memory when he was first taken to this place as he made a right turn on the first cross junction, hoping that he could head towards where the elevator was.

The images displayed on the communication panel did show the hangar of the mobile suit. Audrey was detained in the mobile suit deck together with the rendezvous machine, and at this point, she was definitely at the bottom of the deck. *What can I do once I get there?* he could not think at all as he pressed the elevator button. “Don’t let him get away! Get him!” Alberto’s voice immediately rang from behind, and Banagher, who realized that he had no time to wait for the elevator, hurriedly darted down the stairs beside the passageway.

He immediately dashed down the extremely steep steps that were just like a ladder as its name implied. He arrived onto the lower deck, the siren rang, and right at that moment, two crewmen waiting on the corridor turned their faces at Banagher in surprise, “Oi…” a man spoke up, wanting to raise his hand, only to be sent flying away Banagher slid down the next set of stairs before the growls reached him. He rushed down seven levels worth of steeps as the many footsteps loomed behind him, and rushed to the corridor that should lead to the mobile suit deck.

The air flowed slightly, and the faint smell of grease whiffed in, indicating to him where the mobile suit was. Audrey’s heartbeat that was there, and the touch that indicated the beginning of everything, arrived along with the wind, and he continued to run forward despite the alarms and the people’s growls right after him. He turned at a cross junction, reached the end of a T-junction, turned right, and nearly knocked into someone else running over at him.

“You’re…!”

The young man dodged behind to avoid a head-on collision, and widened his eyes. “Mr Riddhe…” Banagher muttered, but the pursuers’ footsteps caused him to look back again. He immediately grabbed Riddhe’s uniform and pulled him over,

“Ensign Riddhe. Audrey’s on this ship now. The Vist Foundation wants to use her as a hostage.”

“Hostage…!?” Riddhe gasped, and lifted his lower jaw. “Wait!” “Oi, get that guy!” the yells came from the corridor behind Banagher, and he gave a pleading stare at Riddhe. *It’s all on you. If it’s you, you’ll definitely be able to understand.* Banagher had relied on Riddhe when their mobile suits interacted with each other, and looked at the latter, who was gritting his teeth. Riddhe lowered his brown eyes, and gave Banagher a bitter expression.

“…Go.”

He muttered with a barely audible voice, and took the fire extinguisher installed on the wall. “The mobile suit deck’s straight ahead. Hurry.” Riddhe informed Banagher, who did not have the time to thank as he darted forward. The sound of the fire extinguisher being sprayed overpowered the pursuers’ footsteps. The rattled guards’ angry roars and shouts could be heard on the corridor, and entered Banagher’s ears through the white smoke.

The white smoke of the fire extinguisher was pushed by the air flow. Banagher opened the air lock before it caught up, and suddenly stopped upon seeing a wide space in front of him. He could see the mechanics who were stunned by this sudden alarm, the tractor units on their paths, and the cranes that were dangling from the ceiling approximately 30m. As he spotted the mobile suits standing there, he looked around this large cavity. He could see a group of men dressed in black at the bottom of the inner wall opposite where he was, and there was a woman in white blouse surrounded by these hulking men, fresh in his eyes, walking with her back straight.

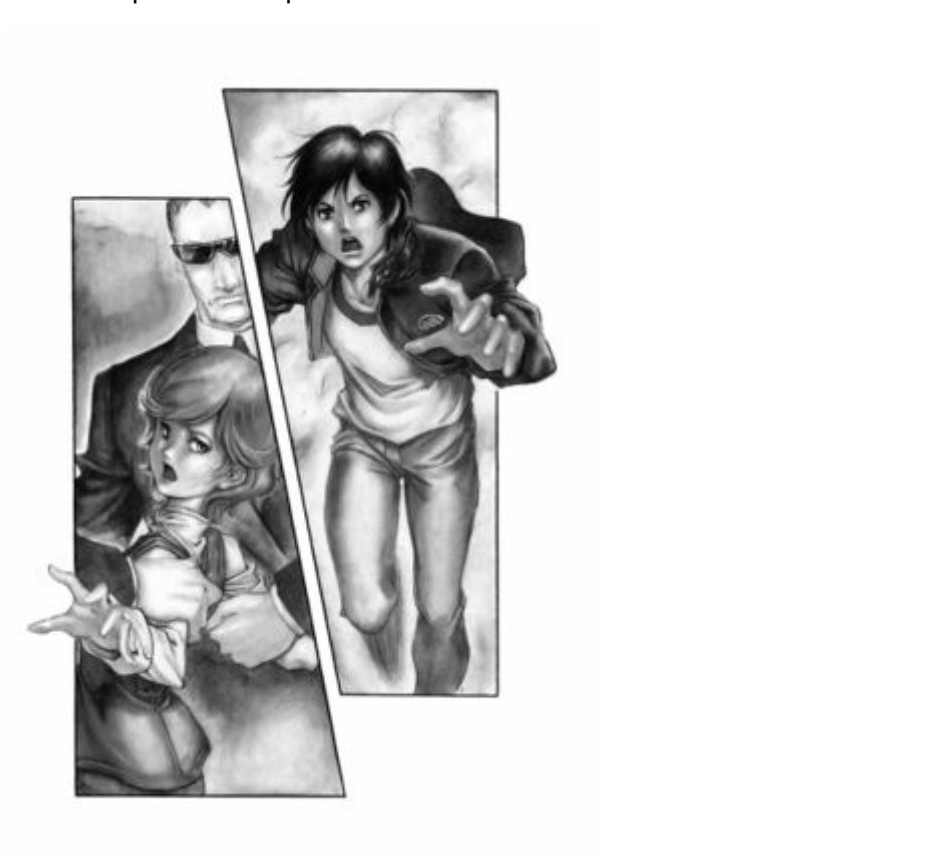
“AUDREY!”

Banagher yelled as he gathered his entire strength in the form of a voice. Audrey stopped in her tracks and looked over, meeting him in the eyes. Despite the fact that she was smaller than a thumb at this point, he could clearly see her expression. Her emerald eyes were wide open, and he could even see himself as a reflection in her eyes.

“Banagher…!”

Audrey’s mouth moved as she took a step towards him. The men surrounding her immediately blocked her way, and the figure in white blouse was covered by the men in black suits as she disappeared. An unfamiliar middle-aged woman looked over at him unhappily, *Such insolence. Let go of me!* Audrey’s struggling voice gradually faded

away, and as Banagher spotted her being dragged to the air lock at the inner wall, he saw nothing else in his eyes. The distance to that point was 40m at maximum, and as his body estimated this subconsciously, he leaped off the floor, his palms ostensibly scratching the floor apart as he sprinted.



At that moment, his right hand that was reaching behind was grabbed, and he was dragged over forcefully. In an instant, his body that was afloat in the air slammed into the wall behind, and a blunt impact struck the back of his head. He could not understand what exactly was going on, and he reached for his numb head as he spotted a person in black pilot suit amidst his fading consciousness.

The uniformly black fabric had golden stripes on it, showing the slender body of the pilot. On the left chest of this armor-like like vest covering the torso, there was the symbol of a Unicorn indicating the Vist Foundation, marked with golden lines as well. It looked like a personalized pilot suit for the “Unicorn”—a complete opposite indicating a stark contrast between light and darkness, a black color giving a demonic image. Banagher did not think too much about what it meant as he looked over the shoulder of the pilot suit in front of him,

trying his best to look for Audrey. He tried to reach his leg forward, but a hand shot out like a bullet, grabbing his throat. In less than a second, his body was pushed back and slammed into the wall again.

The hand pressed down on Banagher's windpipe like a plier, not moving at all. Stricken by the fear of suffocation, he flailed his limbs and tried to escape. However, the pilot's head, covered by the helmet visor, did not move, and the slender body provided an unimaginable strength as it forced Banagher onto the wall. The flailing arms hit the helmet, the visor switch was immediately clicked, and a familiar pair of blue eyes appeared in his sights.

"Miss Marida…!?"

It seemed, deep within the azure pupils ostensibly leading to the sea, a certain emotion jolted for an instant. Of course, Banagher felt that he smelled her sweet body fragrance when he was facing off against that black "Unicorn". He felt the hand on the neck relax, and shout, "Miss Marida, it's me! Banagher Links!" He used this opportunity to grab her by the shoulder, and the most he was about to bring the face covered by the helmet to himself, Marida shook off all doubt as her eyes showed killing intent.

The hollow eyes were darker than when they first met, and were reminiscent of a cave—Banagher felt a chill as he wanted to draw back, but it was too late as Marida slammed her knee into his gut, and a piercing blow felt like it was about to stab through his spine, shaking his entire body. His legs lost strength, and he fell limply on the floor and squeezed out a voice, "Mari…da…". He reached his hand and grabbed the pilot suit. Marida remained unmoved as her legs were spread apart, and as both of them looked at each other, Banagher again sensed that there was a hesitation in the bottom of the other person's eyes, "Ple Twelve!" only to hear this growl.

"Don't let this guy escape. Restrain him."

Alberto, who was standing at the door of the airlock, was panting, and his shoulders were rising and falling as he growled a command. Marida's eyes that were looking down at Banagher became dark hollows again, and the hand grabbing his throat regained strength. As he was being lifted to the wall again, Banagher used his hands to grab Marida's hands. *Miss Marida, please wake up. Audrey—Princess Mineva is over there.* He tried to call out to her with all his will, hoping for the resonance in thoughts they once had; however, what appeared in the bottom of her eyes was a hollow where light could not shine into. Banagher's hand was easily shaken aside, and his arm was restrained as she immediately sent him sprawling on the floor.

“Banagher!” Audrey’s call could be heard faintly. The stone-faced Marida betrayed no expression as she stared down coldly at Banagher on the floor. The eyes overlapped with the black “Unicorn”, and Banagher bit his lips tightly. He gathered his thoughts at Audrey’s presence that was moving away, summoned all his remaining strength, and yelled out,

“AUDREY!”

There was no response. He was dragged up by the arms above his head and brought away from the mobile suit deck. Marida did not respond as she stood around in her black pilot suit like a puppet, her eyes still within a corner of Banagher’s sights.

Part 10[edit]

The tropical forests, which were said to cover 14% of the landscape in the past, once took up 3% of the land. It was said that this figure rose back to 6% during the Universal Century. The primary reason behind this accomplishment was the countermeasures against global warming during the old age, and the reforestation started once the Space Migration officially began. But at the same time, the indigenous people who relied on woodcutting for a living lost their jobs. They did not get proper education to gain decent jobs, and could not find any jobs even if they wanted to make the switch. These people who were the “excessive” were naturally deported into space first, and were living in the colonies where they would not suffer famines or floods. The highly civilized, highly educated did not think about what the actual people involved were thinking as they showered the latter group with good intentions.

The descendants of those ‘excessive population’ stayed in the tropical rainforests that were protected, located within the clustered jungle region of Eastern New Guinea, 17 years ago. These colony residents who were living behind the moon, the people who were abandoned furthest away from Earth, arrived here with the help of the armor called mobile suits, and took part in the invasion of Earth with their comrades scattered along the continent. However, most of the squads could not defend the frontline that was overextended, and could not return back to their motherland—the Republic of Zeon, and could only end up scattered in the forests.

There were the “Zakus”, the main forces of the republic, the “Goufs” that were developed on Earth’s frontline bases, and the amphibious “Goggs” machines. The monoeyed giants used to trample through the forest and fight against the Federation army, but at this point, it was covered by the forest and moss, and the cockpit that was gradually

rotting away because a nest of poisonous snakes. To the salvage industy, this was a gold mine. However, there had not been any incidents of anyone ransacking the mobile suits lying asleep in this place ever since the war end. That was because of a widely accepted misinformation that a core reactor exploded in this place before, and the radiation spread around.

In fact, that was a mean to prevent others from approaching this place, and the old battlefield was already covered by green shrubs for a long time. As of this night, It had been 17 years, 1 month and 15 days, when the first “Zaku” landed on this land—counting from the time the 3rd wave of the Republic’s forces pushed into the South Pacific. What may be the last two remaining “Zakus” were strolling through the forests; their soles that were as large as minivans stepped on the reddish-brown dirt loudly, and the multi-layered sea of trees let out hissing sounds. The trees in this area were more than 30m tall, and thus, the giants that were 17m tall would not be protruding their heads out. It was impossible to see two machines moving from above, and only the birds that were woken from their sleep flew out of the branches away from the machines’ paths, their chirping were the only thing rang under the moonlight.

The MS-05L “Zaku” walking in front is a variant of the initial Zaku-type version, and it had a large sub generator behind it, which also powered the long-barreled beam rifle it was wielding. This sniper-type “Zaku” that was produced in limited numbers at the end of the war could be considered the latest amongst the “Zaku I”, commonly known as the “Old Zakus”. However, the fact that it had become an antique on this day would never change. Following behind was the MS-06K “Zaku Cannon”, a first generation machine that did not have a moveable frame as well. The cannon equipped on its right shoulder looked powerful, but also gave the feeling of the distance in age. As both machines were products produced before the linear seats were created, they did not have all-view monitors, but rectangular flatscreen panels in the cockpit for navigation.

A crescent moon covered in clouds was shown on one of the monitors. If one were to look over, it seemed that the glowing colonies could be seen in the middle of the stars that littered the sky, but their homeland, located behind the moon—the Side 3 currently renamed as the Zeon Republic could not be seen. “It’s so far…” Yomen Kirks muttered as he narrowed his eyes at the moon that would appear and disappear between the trees from time to time. (What?) the neighboring unit Kandle asked back through the wireless communicator, but Kirks ignored it as he let the feeling of the control stick seep into his hand

slowly after having not held it for 3 years. The rhythm of the main generator reached Kirks fingertips, and before the breath of the still-alive “Zaku I” could reach inside his body, he stepped on the brakes and let the machine stop.

“This area alone should be enough, right? It’ll be troublesome to go back if we move too far from the base.”

He looked up at the crown of trees covering him from above as he called out into the wireless communicator. There were no stares from anyone else in this area deemed as a radioactive quarantine zone, and in this forest hailed to have 40 of all lifeforms in the world, the nocturnal animals that had not changed even since the ancient days were letting their howls echo through. The “Zaku Cannon” stopped in its tracks and stood to the rear left side of Kirks’ machine (Yes…) Kandle’s choked on his words as his voice came in through the wireless communicator.

(It’s such a pity. We actually have to bury the machines we kept up till now with our own hands…)

“It can’t be helped. My Sniper Zaku and your Zaku Cannons are just walking antiques now. Since we can’t find anyone to reclaim it, we can only leave it here.”

(That’s true…but they can move though.)

“It’s only a matter of time before they stop moving anyway if they aren’t recharged. We haven’t activated it for quite a few years. You should be rejoicing that they’re able to make it all the way here.”

Kirks released his hands from the control stick and stroked the console in front of him. “We can probably earn a lot if we can sell these to a weapons fan…but this guy probably doesn’t want to be treated as a plaything.” Kirks muttered to himself, and use this surge of emotions to undo the seatbelt of the seat. He took out some highly potent plastic explosives from his spare parts and connected the cables to the countdown timer. He installed them below the console seat, switched off the light of the main generator, and opened the door.

The humid air covered his entire body, and his skin that was more than 50 years old was aging slower, but sweating at this point. As long as the explosion was triggered, the cockpit would be blown to bits, and the “Zaku I” would be in the equivalent of a death state. Kirks pulled out the lift wire used to get up and down the machine, and landed on the double-layered armor at the abdomen, “Don’t blame me.” He said to his beloved machine.

“Some idiot who started a fireworks display in Dakar, and those Federation dogs came killing after us. We can only slip away here. I want to bring you guys along, but based on whatever the sponsor said, it seems that sacrifices are necessary.”

Kirks put his foot on the metal ring of the lift wire and activated the countdown wire. The countdown timer set on the seat started to tick down, and the red numbers of the 5 minute time limit looked exceptionally eye-catching in the cockpit with its lights switched off.

“Our sponsors want to pacify those Federation dogs, so we have to create proof that the Zeon remnants were rounded up for him. As payment, those dogs will let us off. Well, this is embarrassing; we came all the way here from our homeland, and we even lived till now…”

The anti-Federation organization acting as their sponsor, EGUM, would only accept machines of at least the 3rd generation, and the machines had were moved away from New Guinea through all sorts of means. This was the prelude to the extinction of the Zeon remnants on Earth, and the Shinbu base that had always been the largest rally point in the Southern Pacific was moving towards its end—this closure was too unbearable, no different from an escape in the middle of the night, but Kirks had no intention of blaming those people fromEGUM.

The higher-ups ofEGUM, who were aiming to overthrow the Federation government, hoped that the Earth army continued its current military production, and the National Defense senators used the profits of the war economy to control the politics. The anti-government forces were aiming for the moment the Senate started to audit its budget and launch a limited terrorist attack to increase the budget required; and in this sense, EGUMand Neo Zeon were practically waiting for the Federation government to take action. Their time of feeding their subordinates and disguising themselves as Neo Zeon was finally about to come to a close. They lost a homeland they could return to, and what they could only rely on was the belief that they could revive Zeon —no, the people who had things they could believe in were all dead. The terrorist had fallen to the extent of being a mercenary, and he dragged his body, rendered lethargic by the humidity, to live a haphazard life. Now, this man could finally clear off the pretense he had in the past, and that was all.

In this situation, the “Sleeves” that were living in space were not too different. Perhaps the Dakar incident was the last smoke lit, foretelling that they would soon reach annihilation. In the end, once the coexistence with the Federation, the hired terrorists all over the world

would be faced with unemployment. If the Zeon Republic dissolves in Universal Century 100, the name of Zeon would vanish completely, and people like him would probably devolve into real ghosts. “We could have ended things off with a bang.” Kirks squeezed out these heartfelt words from his bitter chest as he turned his bitter smile away from the cockpit.

“There was that Delaz Conflict, and then there were the two Neo Zeon wars. There were so many chances for you to appear, but for some reason, I can’t send myself to my death here. Kandle’s about to have his 3rd brat here. That guy was just a snotty brat during the descent, and now he’s a decent father here. It’s no wonder you and I are old now…”

The middle-aged man’s face, which had useless flesh gathered as he brazenly lived his tough life, was reflected off the switched-off monitor panel. The buzzing of the insects’ wings grazed past his ears, and Kirks gave himself a slap on the face, suddenly felt embarrassed, trembled and lowered his eyes, saying, “Bye then. Go over there and wait for me first.” After this short goodbye, Kirks left the cockpit. Suddenly, there was a communication call, (Leader! We got a code. It’s from the sky!) and Kandle called up as Kirks was about to reach his hand for the lift wire switch.

“From the air? A Federation patrol?”

Kirks immediately brought his upper body into the cockpit and pressed the call button. In this case, it would be earlier than what they expected. *The Federations should be starting their search tomorrow.* The misinformation of this place being contaminated by radiation had been keeping people at bay, and since Kirks and his company had been hiding in this place all this while, he did not feel that the scout planes would fly by here. He regretted switching off the main generator as he looked sidelong the flank of the abdomen at Kandle’s “Zaku Cannon”. (No, this is…) Kandle muttered as his gasp could be heard clearly through the wireless communicator.

(It’s a secret code used by the Zeon army, a code used during the 3rd drop!)

Kirks' heart instantly stopped, and then started to beat again. He took the earphones set on the seat and brought his ears over to them. The sound that was similar to the old Morse code entered his old brain through his eardrums, awakening his memories. It was a code he memorized in his head 17 years ago. At that time, he was encased inside a HRSL capsule together with his mobile suit, and he had been listening to that voice until the moment he was launched down to low orbit. *When my fear and excitement rang in cadence, that was the code—!*

"Please…provide assistance…give the Federation…a good one…?"

Kirks inadvertently uttered these words out as he deciphered this code, and the sound of the words caused his heart to race again. At the same time, the sound of an engine, akin to that of the wind, passed by from above, and Kirks looked up at the sky through the canopy of trees. The crescent moon was giving off a thin and sharp light, and a small dot with a trail of smoke appeared before this light. It was a transport ship with its navigation lights off—no, from its extremely long shape, it seemed to be a VTOL-type ship returning to Earth.

(Leader…) Kandle let out a puzzled voice "Cut off the wireless communication. Remain on standby.) Kirks instinctively ordered and continued to watch the ship as it flew through the night ship. It was calling out with a code used during Earth's invasion, and most probably, it was a ship sent in from ship. Kirks could not think of what sort of effect it would bring as he decided to cut the countdown of the bomb. *BEEP.* The numbers were stopped, indicating a time of less than 2 minutes, and his heart continued to beat in the cockpit of the "Zaku I", unwilling to fade away.

Chapter 2[edit]

Part 1[edit]

"Torrington Base?"

It was a name Alberto had never heard of before, and he could not help but parrot it in his mouth again. "Right, it's a Federation base located in Australia." Martha answered while seemingly annoyed by this hassle.

"After that Zeon remnant attack, it seemed that the Central government has forgotten about that place. The base is surrounded by wilderness without people, so it shouldn't attract a lot of attention even if the "Ra Cailum" heads there. We're going there to get on a ship to space."

Martha sank into a sofa that had brand new cushions and sighed. “Looks like our holiday in the Mediterranean is going to be delayed.” She rested her head on the back of the sofa as she gave a glance aside with that bewitching expression on her face. Ever since she brought Mineva Zabi onto the ship, she had been trying to show off her bewitching charms. Alberto gulped, “Aren’t we taking this ship to space?” and asked with a stiff voice.

“We can’t rely on this ship that exchanges information with Ronan if we want to find the “Box”, right? Besides, it seems that Captain Bright is a sly old fox that’s not easy to deal with. We have to find a way to keep the “Ra Cailum” on Earth.”

Martha finished, and closed her mouth, ostensibly annoyed to talk any further. It was ostensibly the sight of a chairwoman who just finished a day’s worth of work and lounging in a suite room, whether it was the 5m long room isolated from the bedroom or the thoroughly carpeted floor, but of course, this place was not a hotel. This VIP room was installed in a corner of the “Ra Cailum”, and was only used when special guests visit the ship. From the small window, the Indian Ocean 1000m below could be seen from the sky. This room was the last arrangement Captain Bright made when Martha demanded to have the commander room. As the commander and captain, Bright was staying inside the captain’s room, and the commander’s room that was often kept empty should be okay for anyone’s use, but this was a serious problem to the military. The disputes between Martha and Bright had been becoming a common scene to the crew, but it could be said that this room was the start of the dispute between the two.

In fact, this was not the reason behind Martha’s fatigue and anxiousness. “Then, how’s it going?” Martha stopped rubbing her eyes and gave a sharp glance as she questioned, causing Alberto’s shoulders to jerk in shock.

“Well…he insists that he won’t provide the correct information if we don’t release Her Highness Mineva.”

“It has been two days, and you haven’t made any progress? How useless.”

She frowned as she reached her hand for the coffee mug on the table. It had been two days since they used Mineva Zabi as a hostage, and 4 days had passed since the day they reclaimed the “Unicorn”. Alberto’s interrogation on Banagher was completely futile, and the former could only lower his eyes, lifting his eyes to peek at Martha’s expression from time to time.

“Maybe he’s just bluffing about the next coordinates pointing to space? I don’t want to be led on a wide goose chase.”

“Hm…but it appears that the appearance of Her Highness Mineva was a great shock to him. I feel that there’s no room for him to bluff his way. He’s still a kid no matter how he forces things—”

“He’s Cardeas’ child after all. Don’t forget that.”

Martha interrupted with a forceful tone as she set aside the coffee mug somewhat violently. The sound of the china clashing reached Alberto’s ears, and he hurriedly lowered his stare to the floor.

“He’s obstinate, stubborn, and gives the look that he’s bearing the weight of the world…you inherited your mother’s characteristics, but that child called Banagher is practically a clone of Cardeas. They were definitely living separate from each other. How inexplicable.”

Martha’s voice softened as she made this conclusion, and got up from the sofa. She walked to the window and looked at the ocean surface that was awaiting dusk. Her slender back profile appeared in the sunset, and her long shadow was dragged till Alberto’s feet.

“But perhaps he was not lying. The chances of the “Laplace Box” being in Founder Syam’s hands are very high, and I don’t think that grandfather’s cryo room would be located on Earth.”

Only a few people, namely, the Foundation leader and the direct associates to the Founder knew the location of Syam Vist’s cryo room —the room installed with cold sleep installation. The Founder’s direct associate organization was a different entity from the Foundation, and the common practice was that the Foundation leader was to take charge and manage both. With the current leader dead, there was no way Martha could make contact. After Cardeas’ death, Martha once tried to investigate the information she received thoroughly, but she did not find even an avenue with the Founder’s direct organization, let alone where the cryo room was located. The extent of this secrecy made Alberto and Martha deduce and believe firmly that the “Box” was hidden in the hidden location of a Founder.

The problem was that without the recognition of the Founder, and without the knowledge of the “Box”, there was no way Martha could be accepted officially as the Foundation’s leader. She managed to get the approval of her family simply by proposing to prevent the “Box” from being opened, and got up to the seat of the substitute leader, but there definitely was not just one executive amongst the Foundation’s management who was repulsed by her forceful actions. The Founder

Syam had already known the truth behind Cardeas death, and when adding everything together, there was no guarantee that he was trying to prevent her plan. Alberto timidly looked at the back of the person in front of him, and Martha probably sensed that she was on thin ice as her back, covered by the shadow, looked even more tense than before.

“We still have to carry out the estimates for our course. I want to get the correct coordinates before we leave Earth…well, never mind. He’ll have to accompany us until the end. Let’s try to convince him slowly by bringing Her Highness Mineva along.”

Martha turned her face back, and the temporal moment of feebleness disappeared from her face, replaced with a radiant smile. The shadow reaching Alberto’s feet went away, and once he sensed the usual atmosphere of isolation descend upon them again, “About this.” he said tentatively.

“If we want to bring the “Banshee” together with the specimen into space, I suppose it’s best if she doesn’t take the same ship as Banagher or Her Highness.”

“Why?”

“They knew each other before the adjustments. If there’s a long time interaction, it’ll probably cause a mental burden on the specimen. President Bentner also reported that there seems to be signs of that—”

“Alberto.”

Martha looked like she was mocking a child as she showed a pitiful bitter smile on her face, causing Alberto to be unable to finish what he wanted to say. “From what I hear, you aren’t talking about a ‘specimen’, but showing your concern for a ‘lover’.” The words that followed caused his body to suddenly heat up.

“Your protection for her ends here. The reason you’re chosen as her master is because the data shows that opposite genders are easier to control. As long as the memory in her mind is reset to zero, this relationship will end. You should understand, right?”

Martha walked towards Alberto as her blond hair let out a rasping sound and the strong perfume aroma swarmed him. *It’s the smell of night.* As he immediately thought, her fingers touched his lower belly, “If you like to play with dolls, it’s fine.” and her whisper entered through his ears.

“But is this good? She can only use her mouth.”

He felt the pressure gathering below his belly for an instant vanish because of this line, and inadvertently withdrew back as he glared back at Martha. “WAKE UP!!” The angry chiding voice suddenly rang like a slap to his face.

“If unit 1 is the Unicorn, the “Banshee” as unit 2 is the lion. It’s just like the symbolism on that tapestry, they’re the complimentary beasts protecting the “Box”. You’re the successor to the Vist Foundation, so you better make them listen to you.”

The heavy presence of the tapestry, “The Lady and the Unicorn” that was moved Vist residence in the “Magallanica”, appeared in Alberto’s mind, dampening his burning head. The rage that suddenly swelled up in him a moment ago became vague because of this, and he could only lower his head quietly.

“If you can’t make them object, you’ll be left to feed on the scraps. Right now, even though the “Unicorn” is chained up, it continues to roam the wilderness. If you don’t want to lose to your little brother, you better not let go of the lion.”

Little brother. This term, which bore no relation and yet felt extremely realistic, seeped into Alberto’s heart, and the last ounce of will to argue back melted. His restrained body and mind were hardened, as he felt himself sinking into floor as he answered with a murmur, “…yes.” . Martha snorted back and turned her face away, obviously having nothing to inform left.

Part 2[edit]

Alberto arrived outside the room, and found Marida Cruz waiting at the door. He gasped as he saw the deep blue eyes looking right at him, and averted his gaze as he walked down the corridor with her behind. “…Are you alright?” He asked.

“Yes. I had President Bentner carry out the adjustments.”

Marida followed Alberto on the right side as she answered with a monotonous voice. Two days after her direct meeting with Banagher, her neural waves were once messed up to a point that she nearly could not resonate with the psycommu, and though the symptoms had subsided, the frequency of the headaches she had was obviously increasing. Bentner indicated that Marida took hypnotism with drugs, and that they would need to carry out external operations if they wanted to carry out proper ‘adjustments’. Since they did not have the time to carry out the operations, they could only carry out treatments against the symptoms to ease and eliminate the headaches caused by

the reactions.

But could she still remain as herself even after the operation on the brain? No, if everyone's mind could be rewritten, there would be no need to let her remain as herself. It was just like what Martha said in her mocking, he was just restrained by meaningless thoughts. Alberto thought to himself as looked over his own shoulder at Marida, dressed in Vist Foundation formal clothing. Her original consciousness was sealed by drugs and hypnosis, but she did not seem as helpless as those of sleepwalkers, and her footsteps seem no different from an ordinary person. However, there was no shred of emotion in her eyes that were looking back at Alberto, and they looked like two hollow glass eyes, extremely unnatural.

He thought that those were the eyes of a puppet. The deep blue eyes that once covered him, the eyes of the woman who had both fortitude and gentleness were not present. Once he confirmed this, his chest felt a little gloomy, and he stopped in the middle of the corridor. He looked back at Marida who stopped as well, and averted his sights, "… Don't endure it if you're having it tough." He squeezed out a voice as he said,

"If you feel the slightest bit unwell, tell me."

"Yes."

"The "Banshee" is not an ordinary mobile suit. If you can't perform your best like usual, it'll affect the machine's abilities."

"Yes, I'll do my best."

The glass pearl-like eyes did not waver at all as Marida merely answered blankly. *Play with dolls,* Martha's voice rang in his mind, and an inevitable rash of anxiety suddenly rushed up his heart, "DO YOU UNDERSTAND OR NOT!?" he yelled clumsily,

"IF YOU FIND IT UNBEARABLE, UST SAY IT. IF YOU SAY THAT YOU CAN'T CONTINUE TO PILOT IT, I'LL GET THEM TO SWITCH YOU OUT!"

Alberto inadvertently grabbed Marida by her upper arms and looked into those dull-looking hollow eyes. However, the latter did not back away, and her unwavering eyes merely blinked once.

"If you have that intent, I can take you away from here if you want to. Think more for your own sake, I—"

"Is that an order?"

The thoroughly emotionless stare and voice cornered Alberto, and his arms lost strength. He grabbed Marida by the arms, but he just could not make a proper grip. “This isn’t what I mean…!” Alberto spoke halfway through, “Is that woman the pilot of the “Banshee”?” However, a third person’s voice caused him to jolt with shock.

He looked back, and found Riddhe Marcenas standing at the cross junction of the corridor, “It confounds me to think that this lady here is a Cyber-Newtype.” Riddhe said as he frowned and approached Alberto. *Since when has that guy been standing there watching?* Alberto resisted the urge to click his tongue and turned to face Riddhe, ostensibly trying to block Marida’s sights.

“She’s most likely a kidnapped orphan, am I right? Does the Vist Foundation deal with human trafficking too?”

“What is it you want, Ensign Riddhe?”

Alberto used his hand to restrain Marida, who had an intent to fight, and gave a refusing look to the man in officer uniform in front of him, telling him not to approach. At about approximately 2m distance, Riddhe stopped in his tracks and, “I hope to meet Mineva Zabi.” He said fiercely.

“Just 5 minutes. I’m the one who brought her to Earth in the first place. There’re some things I want to know.”

“I should have said before that it’s impossible. Currently, Her Highness Mineva is under the protection of the Foundation. Even if it’s the prince of the Marcenas’ family, we can’t allow Her Highness to meet an officer of the Federation.”

“Then let me see Banagher.” Riddhe continued to mutter as his fists showed the restrained anger. “I was ordered directly by the Senate Council, and it’s my duty to report everything that happens on this “Ra Cailum” to the superiors. As a civilian, you have no right to give me instructions.”

“Unfortunately, I can’t allow that each. If we’re talking about authority, I’m acting under the authority of the Senate Council chairman. If you want a request to talk directly, please obtain the permission of the superior.”

Upon seeing the speechless Riddhe, he felt like gloating over it. He moved his legs that were still, walked by the other man, “First, a family issue isn’t something the military should interfere with, right?” and added.

“Banagher Links is the son of the ex-Foundation leader, Cardeas Vist. He’s an illegitmate child, but he does have the Vist family name.”

“Banagher’s a member of the Vist family…?”

Stupefied. Riddhe’s face showed this description as he frowned and turned his widened eyes at Alberto. *During the escape two days ago, this man once intended to help Banagher escape. The situation surrounding the “Box” is one thing, but what sort of change will happen to his emotional state after the sense of camaraderie with Banagher as allies?* Alberto sneered, “You should understand, right?” and deliberately emphasized in a cocky manner.

“This is simply gossip, nothing to do with the “Box” and the “Unicorn”. His existence itself is a shame to the family. I hope that you as an outsider will ask less next time.”

Upon seeing Riddhe’s legs crumble as he retreated to the wall, Alberto felt that he vented out all his frustrations, and intended to leave the scene. However, a little snicker suddenly rang, causing him to stop in his tracks.

Riddhe was leaning against the wall as his body, arched forward, trembled, and his throat let out a croaking laugh. His voice got louder, “This is really amazing?” he let out a stiff laughter, and his laughing voice entered Alberto’s voice.

“So I’ve been actually fighting against the 100-year-old enemy…even if this is caused by the “Box”, this is really set up too perfectly. It’s really a joke.”

Riddhe’s bitter smile had a tint of gloominess to it, and he slammed his trembling fist at the wall. Alberto felt a chill that could cool his heart, “What do you mean?” and frowned as he asked. “Go ask Syam Vist yourself!” Riddhe answered back furiously as his expression changed, and turned a hideous look at Alberto.

“What did your Founder do 100 years ago, and how did he get the “Box”, build the Foundation? Once you know that, you can only laugh dryly at it.”

The bitterness swelled out from Riddhe’s shoulders as well, and before Alberto could ask, he turned away and left. The unexpected counter was not the only thing that shocked Alberto, and it felt like there was something more basic shaking his inner heart as he stared at that back with the speechless Marida.

Alberto clearly remembered the Foundation’s history, when he married

into the Vist Foundation. However, the basic development of the Foundation—how Syam obtained the “Laplace Box”, and the “Box” itself were classified. There were no reasons for any outsiders to know about it, and the family members did not care about it. The Vist Foundation was a huge establishment, the “Box” had become a revered object that would not normally become a conversational topic, and nobody would talk about the Foundation Syam as well. Alberto had not talked to him ever since he retired from his position as the leader of the Foundation. Alberto himself only knew of the other man when he was introduced as the great-grandson during the grand retirement party, but that was just a vague memory from his youth.

Despire this, Riddhe sounded like he knew Syam. He called the Vist Foundation his 100-year-old enemy, and told Alberto to understand how Syam obtained the “Box”. *As the descendant of the first prime minister of the Federation government, maybe he’s hiding some secret that’s not to be known?* Alberto had this vague understanding as he felt an unknown chill surge up his body, and he looked very tentative as he stared at the back that was leaving.

Does he know what’s inside the “Box”—?

Part 3[edit]

The woman summoned onto the monitor in the second communication room was in her twenties, and her beauty could be described as coquettish, a feature one would wonder whether it existed just for her. She had a nice look, but her alluring features could be mistaken as opportune areas as she was especially attractive. Perhaps this was a type men would say that they might like.

(I’m Beltorchika Irma, and I’ll be reporting the results of the investigation you requested in lieu of senior manager Stephanie.)

Even so, the green-filled eyes had an adamant glint that would not allow others to approach easily. Her proper greeting of a refined lady caused Bright to feel that he was overwhelmed in terms of momentum. “Yes, nice to meet you, Beltorchika.” He greeted back and looked around the empty communication room for no meaningful reason.

“I didn’t think that you’ll be the one reporting. Are you working at the Luio Chamber of Commerce?”

(I’m not affiliated as a Luio employee. Please view me as a freelancer.”

Beltorchika used her hand to tidy her blond hair that was cut short and gave a somewhat stiff smile. (Because of my relations with Kayaba, senior manager Stephanie has been taking care of me, and Mr Kai

Shiden would often come by too.)

“Oh…it sounds like there’s quite a few people both you and I know of.)

Bright said after giving a stiff smile. The reason why both sides could not show their honest smiles was probably because of the huge hollow they saw in each other, the man called Amuro Ray. After the One Year War, there was an internal conflict which divided the Earth Federation army—the “Gryps Conflict”, and Bright joined the Anti Earth Union Group, while Beltorchika joined the assistance group “Karaba”. “Karaba” had its base located on Earth, and so, Beltorchika hardly had any interaction with Bright, who was in the base. However, Bright once inadvertently heard of Beltorchika from Amuro Ray, who joined “Karaba“ as well.

The Titans were a radicals rightist military organization which came to power in the Federation army by expanding their influence in the namesake of purging the Zeon remnants, and once they were overthrown, the AEUG and “Karaba”, which were rebel organizations, naturally ended their roles. Both organizations were absorbed by the government, and as their groups got destroyed, Bright and the other military men managed to return to their normal squads, but volunteers like Beltorchika, who were civilians, disappeared from the spotlight. Some people felt disappointed that the AEUG got absorbed and went off to join the anti-government forces as guerillas, while Bright heard from his old contacts in the past that quite a few people continued on in the information trading business. He thought that Beltorchika would be the latter case here. When the Gryps Conflict started, The Luio Chamber of Commerce, headquarted in Hong Kong, was the largest sponsor of “Karaba”, and since Beltorchika had a personal relationship with the president’s daughter Stephanie Luio, there was no reason for the former not to get a job.

But, unrelated to this, Bright could imagine that Beltorchika had most likely drifted away from the rigid world once she got involved with a man like Amuro. Amuro Ray was hailed as the ace pilot during the One Year War, but after the War, he was feared as a proponent of Newtype thinking, and was imprisoned in house arrest. When the Titans were growing in influence, Beltorchika, not anyone else, was the one who caused the traumatized Amuro to stand up again, and this was something Bright heard from Amuro himself. “What happened to Lieutenant Amuro was a pity.” Bright gave a probing look at those eyes on the monitor again,

This insensitive line would touch upon a person’s old wounds, but Bright believed if this line would cause Beltorchika to waver, he could

be certain that it was best not to trust in her abilities. He realized that he was doing something cruel as he hid his sense of guilt and looked at the other person's face with a nonchalant look. Beltorchika herself merely gave a probing look, and then chuckled, (It's Commander Amuro, right?), as she gave an unfettered tone.

"Ah, you're right. Sorry."

(You don't have to think for my sake. We used to be deeply in love with each other, and then we broke up. I heard he died in battle during "Char's Counterattack", and I was depressed for a while…but his body wasn't discovered, right?)

"Yes…"

(Isn't him being MIA after the battle against his arch-nemesis Char a suitable ending for a romantic like him? Up till now, I sometimes feel that he should be alive, somewhere. Even if we lose the shell of the human called Amuro, I do feel that his heart has merged with space…)

Beltorchika looked like she was staring in the distance as she narrowed her eyes, and Bright felt that these words of her were not forced. *The brat who's always crying about on "White Base" had become a man who made a woman show this expression?* Bright was suddenly overcome by grief as he too looked afar, and Beltorchika chuckled, saying, (You're just like what Amuro said, always worrying.), shocking the man. Bright saw the message shown on the woman's face, and realized that his thoughts were seen through, "I admit this." and could only smile wryly as he showed what little he had in his mind.

"That's why I can talk to you like this now. Since the response is so swift, I suppose the Luio Chamber of Commerce is starting to be wary of the Vist Foundation's movements?"

It was two days ago since the moment when he first established contact with the Luio Chamber of Commerce and requested them to investigate everything involving this incident—right after Mineva Vist visited the "Ra Cailum" as an unexpected guest and the "Unicorn" pilot escaped, creating a commotion. It was impossible to think that the other party would be so quick with their response if they had not been investigating all this while. As Bright probed in, (Yeah, the Luio Chamber of Commerce and the Vist Foundation are two large organizations competing against each other, at least on Earth.) Beltorchika simply gave a direct answer.

(On the surface, the situation is that 'the rich are lazy to spend the effort fighting each other', but there are a lot of strings being pulled

underneath… regarding the “Laplace Box”, it seemed that the Luio family had already known of its existence. The Vist Foundation had the “ Box”, so the Luio family could only try to avoid a direct confrontation —this seemed to be an unwritten rule bordering superstition in their family. Miss Stephanie has not explained this to be me clearly, but the Chamber of Commerce once had a scuffle with the Foundation in the past and took a severe defeat. This incident started because the ex-leader of the Foundation, Cardeas Vist, made his own decision to release the “Box”.)

Beltorchika started to explain to Bright how everything happened, the negative rumors surrounding Cardeas’ death, the current substitute leader Martha planning to reclaim the “Box”, the Settlement Issues Council represented by Ronan intending to use this chance to get the “Box” and establish the Federation’s authority once the Zeon Republic got dissolved, and how Neo Zeon, called the “Sleeves”, had the shadow of the old Republic of Zeon behind it…

(With regards to the relation of the “Sleeves” leader, Full Frontal and the Zeon Republic, we couldn’t investigate it clearly. There were rumors that the people working under the ex-prime minister Darcia were moving, but the information control here is too strict…)

“I read in a report that the era after the Wars had been starting to rise within the Republic, and the Nationalism was gradually reviving. There also appears to be movements of people supporting Neo Zeon fleets in Side 6. This is getting tough.”

(Even so, the Federation is in the power struggle for the “Box”, and can’t seem to have a common goal.)

“Yeah. Martha of the Vist Foundation and Ronan of the Settlement Issues Council want to use the army as their personal property, and that “Second Coming of Char” who intends to topple the establishment…I really can’t help but feel that times are changing.”

Beltorchika made a frown with her primp and proper eyebrows, perhaps because she just heard these unexpected words from Bright. The excessive information cause Bright to feel the heaviness of his head as he leaned on the back of the chair, “Am I wrong?” and he sighed as he said.

“Leaving aside the One Year War, it has been the same for the Titans and the Zeon remnants. Whether others agreed or not, it’s true that they had their own thoughts too. The wars that were started in the past was because people had opposition against the establishment called the Federation, and where humanity stood at this point; However,

there's no such ideals now. I'm not sure what this "Box" that can topple the world is, but I can see the greed of those who want to monopolize it, that whoever gets the "Box" can gain authority. In other words, the season for politics is over, and the era of a cold world that can only be moved by self-profit and authority has come before us. That's why this individual rule was disorderly, causing the tragedy at Dakar."

(I do understand what you mean, but I can't accept this way of thinking. Your words seem to imply that it's alright to start wars as long as we have our own ideals.)

On hearing this direct refute, he felt that someone just poked him in the head. (I'm sorry. I'm someone who speaks too much. Amuro used to remind me of this habit I have.) Beltorchika said, but the glance she shot through the monitor showed that she had no intent of retracting her words. Bright was shocked that he was unabashed in beautifying the past and criticizing the present, and that perhaps was the proof that he was advanced in age. "No, I was insensitive in my choice of words. My wife often reproves me regarding this too." He tried to calm himself down as he was a little shocked by how outdated his personal ideals were.

"Anyway, thank you for telling me this. I can more or less plan for the future now. Please also send my regards to senior manager Stephanie too. However, it seems that it's not going to be easy repaying this favour…"

(The Luio Chamber of Commerce won't simply watch the Federation's internal strife from the sidelines, so I suppose you shouldn't be too concerned by it…but what do you intend to do?)

"This isn't easy. I want to end the fight over the "Box" as soon as possible to prevent incidents like Dakar from happening again…but it's really pointless to choose sides between the Foundation and the Settlement Issues Council. Actually, if the Vist Foundation people enter space, the "Ra Cailum" will lose its opportunity to intervene."

Once the higher-ups ordered for the people from the Foundation to be ferried to Torrington Base, the "Ra Cailum" would have to stay on Earth and defend against terrorist attacks. Most likely, this was the instruction given by Martha to the Senate Council. The only one who could overturn the current situation was Ronan Marcenas himself, but there was still no news from him. Even the unbelievably potent card, Mineva Zabi, seemed to be sent over from Ronan himself. From the current situation, it seemed that the Foundation had the Settlement Issue Council's number, and the fragile look of Ensign Riddhe proved that this was not a decoy strategy.

With the Vist Foundation sealing them all completely, Ronan's son had lost his goal in his adamant eyes. Perhaps Riddhe was the one who was bearing the most pressure when things were going in an unexpected direction. Logically, if he could relax his tense shoulders, he should be able to find a way out with his inherent intellect…

(So even the "White Base" captain that managed to break through Zeon forces with one ship has to surrender with both hands up now?)

"The situation's perilous now. It's not as simple as back then; once I got promoted to the position of a commander, Londo Bell became a hostage. To break through with a single ship is really—"

The moment he answered with a wry smile on his face, Bright felt an electric flow surge through his mind. *Break through with a single ship…* Bright repeated in his heart, and let his thoughts work as he did not want to let go of this moment of inspiration. (Captain Bright) He was not paying attention to Beltorchika, who gave him a serious look and called him.

(What I'm going to say now has nothing to do with the Luio Foundation. Please treat it as my own rambling…last morning, there was a tramp ship on the South Pacific that broke off from its anticipated routes and broke off contact.)

Upon seeing the tense face, Bright understood that this was no trivial affair at all. He set aside his thoughts that had this flash of inspiration, "What's on it?" he asked, and Beltorchika answered, "It's a Zeon remnant mobile suit." He was already mentally prepared, but her voice caused his heart to race.

(To avoid the backlash from the Dakar incident, there was a squad that escaped to New Guinea. The ship was originally planned to head to Africa, but now it's heading south to Australia.)

Australia—the continent where Torrington Base was located. If it were yesterday morning, it would be the same moment as when this ship was ordered to change its course. (Of course, there's no real proof to be sure that this has anything to do with the movements of the "Ra Cailum".) Beltorchika said and gave a meaningful look from the monitor.

(But I'm concerned with how both sides are moving at the same time. Please be careful.)

"I understand. Does the Luio Chamber of Commerce have any business dealings with the remnants to let them escape?"

(There's no direct relation, but we can't clear this relationship.)

"Is that so…sorry for making you lose your sense of morality."

(Please don't mind. I merely muttered to myself as I don't want to see the ship Amuro once rode on get damaged.)

Beltorchika professed as she hid the tightrope-like tension under her smile. There was a sense of extremely complicated feelings swelling in Bright, ostensibly graciousness or apologetic, as he sight his sights on this new hope that appeared in front of him. He then tried to piece it with the inspiration he had before.

Beltorchika didn't mention about Mineva Zabi at all. If she and the Luio Chamber of Commerce don't know about this, it will be hard to imagine that the Zeon remnants are aiming to get Mineva back. They're targeting the "Unicorn". I will have to factor in the "Garencieres" that went missing after we lost sight of it in Dakar. If they have any intent to take the "Unicorn" back, if they were waiting to ambush the "Ra Cailum" without such fighting strength, perhaps—

"…Maybe we'll get hurt."

Bright inadvertently blurted out and looked over at the console in front of the monitor. Beltorchika however tilted her head without knowing what was going on.

"No, I won't let this "Ra Cailum" sink. We won't sink here, but…"

This will be a risky move, but if we're successful, I may be able to take the initiative over the Foundation and the Settlement Issues Council. Bright got up as he relied on the ray of light that shone into his thoughts. On the other side of the monitor, Beltorchika blinked, and her expression was like a young girl.

Part 4[edit]

"…Audrey Burne. Even if it's a pseudonym, it certainly sounds delightful. I do watch those movies too."

Martha said as she eased herself into the seat opposite. Mineva could tell from this woman's mannerism that she knew etiquette was a weapon to protect herself. During the past 2 days, Martha had already shed off, 1, 2 layers off her mask and started to show her arrogant nature, but that refined etiquette of hers still demanded equal respect from the other party. Mineva clenched the fists on her knees and turned her silent stare at the other woman. Her sense of danger were telling herself that if she did not exert strength on herself like this, she would be devoured by Martha's pace.

The officer room crewmen dressed in white attendant clothes were serving soup according to where both women were seated. As the flagship of Londo Bell, the “Ra Cailum” had a commander room with top-notch furniture inside. The 8-seater table was made of authentic oak, and the cutlery were all of top-grade branded goods. The reason why a commander room, which would occasionally act as a social stage for special guests, existed, was because it was an important ‘armament’. Whether it was the well-trained attendants or the carpet with nary a speck of dust, they certainly showed the merit of the commander or the captain. However, the commander was not in that room.

The ones in the room were only Martha, the black-clothed Foundation subordinates escorting her, and no crew member of the “Ra Cailum” other than the two attendants. The basic greetings, which were a form of etiquette, were simply formal interactions, and the atmosphere in this room was equivalent to that of an interrogation room. The fragrance of the soup served in front of Mineva had an invisible malice, torturing her. This was probably made from a retort pouch used by a high-class hotel, but her body would not be able to take it as she went on a hunger strike for 2 days. As long as she relaxed, she felt that she would fall anytime—

“Please enjoy.”

Martha said, showing a smile indicating that she saw through the other party. Mineva held her breath as she excluded the nutritious looking soup from her sights.

“You’ve been drinking only water ever since you arrived here, haven’t you? Your body won’t last at this rate. Besides, your body isn’t just your—”

“I have no intention of accepting anything from the enemy.”

The voice that interrupted caused the attendant’s hand to tremble as the grape wine was being poured. The men from the Foundation, who were standing at the door, gave nervous looks into the room, but Martha’s expression did not change at all, “How unexpected.” Martha did not stop smiling as she said these words and took a sip from the wine.

“I should have explained to you regarding how we plan to deal with the “Box”. We believe that you’re on the same side as us, Your Highness.”

“Then, why did you detain Banagher Links?”

“He did take the “Unicorn”, and is suspected to be involved in a

terrorist attack. And now, he intended to escape from the ship. It's to be expected that we detain him."

"Then what about Marida? She's my subordinate. If you say that you're on the same side as me, I hope that you return her to me."

Martha put the wine glass back on the table as she glanced to the door. The black Foundation subordinates nodded and opened the door. The two attendants, who were prompted to leave, went through the door, and once the subordinates closed the door, Martha raised the glass again. This room became a place where only the two of them were in, and Martha swirled the liquid that was as red as lipstick, "Even if you wish for this, Your Highness, she probably wouldn't listen." She slowly spoke up.

"Lieutenant Marida…Ple Twelve is currently working under us. This is her own will."

"Will? You forcefully made adjustments to her and dare to brazenly—"

"That's right, we made adjustments to her. Just like what Neo Zeon did in the past."

Martha removed her smile as her icy cold and sharp stare pierced into Mineva's heart together with her voice, causing the latter to be silent. She recalled the pair of blue eyes that once easily subdued the escaped Banagher and did not respond upon seeing her. That hollow expression was just like the moment when Marida was first detained on the "Garencieres". She was like a puppet with its strings snapped —"Princess Mineva, please don't act innocent here." Martha turn her lips into a smile as she said,

"We're not the ones who create that pitiful creature, but you. I just want to release her inner thoughts and give her a chance of revenge."

"Revenge…?"

"Yes, I want her to take revenge on the world that created her, the world dominated by the logic of men."

Martha raised the empty glass, and then got around the table as she walked towards Mineva. The latter resisted the urge to leave her seat as she continued to look in front.

"Princess Mineva, you're one of the victims too. The logic of men set up the conflict between the Federation and Zeon, and this logic set you upon a throne that doesn't exist. Even so, nobody's willing to listen to you. Those men just see the "Laplace Box" dangling in front of them and lose themselves like crazy dogs."

Martha brought her face to Mineva's ears, and whispered, "Don't you find this ugly?" her voice had the fresh stench of grape wine, and the latter felt like she was ensnared by snakes as goosebumps rose on her.

"In this sense, you have the natural flair for it. Do you want to ally with me, Princess Mineva? I won't put you in a spot, and I can assure the safety of the Zeon remnants following you."

"Ally, with you…?"

Mineva inadvertently turned her head around and looked at the face sticking close to her shoulder. Martha looked back at the face doubting her intellect as she withdrew, "If men continue to direct, humanity will reach its doom sooner or later." She left these words behind as she got behind Mineva.

"This planet is already in tatters…we need the sense of women to rule the world to prevent the same mistakes from happening again. There was a movement of female rights a long time ago, but that was a battle of authority using the logic of men. What I seek, however, is different. If we follow the logic and rational of nature, the ones dominating society are naturally women."

Martha toyed with the empty glass as she put her other hand around Mineva's shoulder. The latter felt goosebumps from the chill of the hand, and she looked down at the soup that was about to go cold.

"To put it simply, the biological model of humans is chained within the bag called the womb. Men are simply in charge of inserting their seeds, and beside that role, it can be said that they're aliens without value biology. That's why men like to boast about themselves. They boast about the causes of righteousness, their ideals, and they want to find value in this world itself, starting wars in the end. Up till now, humanity has been becoming arrogant as they found their sense of self-worth against nature, and allowed men to continue their wanton belly. It's about time to return things to how they were. In order to move the shackle of the womb into space, 10,000 lightyears away…"

"Miss Martha, do you have children?"

The interrupting voice caused Martha's fingers, resting on Mineva's shoulder, to tremble. "Two of them. why?" Upon hearing the stiff tone, Mineva felt the reason by the chill in her heart, "Are they the children you bore?" she started to ask with a personal tone.

"…What do you mean?"

“I don’t understand what kind of person my mother is, and that’s because she dead before I could remember. However, there’s no reason for me to remember that she’s still my mother. A female as a mother, someone with a motherly nature, anyone will give off that sort of gentle presence. I can’t sense that maternal presence from you.”

Martha’s expression immediately changed as she stumbled backwards. Mineva saw the suit that showed the other woman’s bodyline, realized that she obviously put in her utmost effort to maintain her skin so as to prevent people from realizing her age, *as expected* and secretly muttered to herself.

This woman, while acting as a clever tactician, had an immature flair on her. Her girlish ideals and grudges had corrupted her right from the base, and it felt like she lost something as she increased in age. She talked of her knowledge of humans, but she never understood people, and did not intend to understand them. Martha was a hypocrite of a reformer. Mineva stood up and looked in front, feeling that there was no need for her to be afraid. Martha wanted to maintain his footing, but could not do so, and stumbled backwards again as Mineva glared at her with her clearly hostile eyes.

“You denied the logic of men, and yet used that to conquer Marida. It’s possible if you explained that it was the ruthlessness of women at work, but you’re acting just like a man when you’re using that excuse to rationalize your knowledge. You’re not the kind of woman you say. Of course, you’re not a man. You’re just using the tone of a man to exercise the cruelty of a woman, a conman who uses whatever indecent weapons—”

Something grazed past Mineva’s face before she could finish, and a sharp sound glided past the sky as it entered her ears. The shrill sound of the glass breaking rang from behind, and the Foundation subordinates in black charged into the room, perhaps because they realized that there was something amiss in the situation. Mineva stared at Martha, not moving at all, and the latter’s hand, which threw the glass at Mineva, continued to look over.

“There’s nothing at all. Move out.”

Martha chastised them without moving her head, and clasped her hands that were still trembling a little. The men looked a little tentative as they looked around the room, and then retreated from it. Once the door was closed, Martha regained some of her cool, and she flicked her hair and gave a wry look as she muttered, “You got me there.”Mineva however merely heaved a slight sift of relief.

“I was careless and thought that you’re just a little pipsqueak. It seems that I underestimated you, and that you are really capable to talking down the pilot of the “Unicorn”.”

“I underestimated you too. You do have feminine points.”

With her back facing the wine glass that was shattered on the wall, Mineva expressed her true thoughts. Martha hid her wry look as she showed anger in her eyes again and snorted, “Same goes for you. I should respect that arrogant self-esteem of yours.” She sighed as she said this, and tied the strands of hair covering her forehead between her fingers.

“But that self-esteem will kill. You understand? You just robbed the future off the Zeon remnants who admired you. Their only future is to coexist with the Vist Foundation. Women are supposed to play the role of protector. I suppose you aren’t?”

Mineva was already prepared, but the poison arrow in the form of words still caused quite the shock. Martha probably noticed Mineva clenching her fists as her lips, coated with a thick layer of lipstick, twisted as she sneered. “Excuse me. I’ll have to make a correction here”. She said as she took a step forward.

“It’s also a woman’s ability to use their self-esteem to kill men. Be a fine woman, and it’s best if you can turn that Banagher Links into your own fertilizer.”

Martha left these words sidelong as she walked towards the door. Mineva resisted the urge to look back and retort as she stood where she was. The door opened, and closed, and the poisonous air surrounding Martha, which filled the room, immediately vanished. What replaced it and struck Mineva was a heavy sense of fatigue.

Mineva could not exhale immediately as she looked down at the bowl of soup that turned cold. Her stomach that was growling had stopped doing so, and she, who felt only thirst, reached for the cup of water with condensed water on it. Her trembling fingers could not listen to her command, and some of the water that was poured in sputtered out. The water that drenched the tablecloth flowed down the edges of the table as it dripped.

I won’t regret it, and that’s how it is. Mineva looked at the water droplets that was dripping and convinced herself in her heart. There was a familiar voice ringing in her heart, the voice of a voice calling for her. That glimpse of the face two days ago was more mature than it was the last time she saw him. That tanned and reliable face was only

looking at her as it called. He too was imprisoned somewhere on this ship, struggling alone as he bore this heavy secret. He did not rely on anyone else, and there was no hope for him to be saved. He would continue to fight on until a certain someone he could trust tell him that 'it was enough'.

However, that would be equivalent to defeat. Even if the opponent merely wanted to revert the situation back to normal after reclaiming the "Box", Mineva would definitely not succumb to those people who took away Marida's soul. She did not want a woman like Martha to let things develop as she please. *I hope that you'll continue to hang on,* she cheered on Banagher in her heart as she recalled the words Martha said, shocked by this as a result. *It's also a woman's ability to use their self-esteem to kill men*—she was prompted by the urge not to associate herself with Martha's ego. *I was intending to watch Banagher and my Zeon people die.*

Then, what should I do? Mineva could not even make a sound as she, out of strength, put her hand on the table to support herself. She grabbed the wet tablecloth to suppress the emotion surging up her throat. The water oozed from between her fingers, and the dripping sound echoed through the commander room.

Part 5[edit]

The sound of water dripping was itching Banagher's eardrums in a regular rhythm. He looked away from the arm slightly and stared over at where the sound came from. There was the sound of new water droplets dripping from the tap at the basin, located in a corner of the officer room that was transformed into a detention room, and there was a unique echo that rang through this dim room.

"Audrey Burne…just view her as this for now. Mineva Zabi isn't here. What you see is a woman with hidden depths, so everything depends on how you want to deal with her."

The sound of the water droplets dripping resonated with Alberto's voice. Banagher lost the strength and will to close off the tap as he put his arm on his face as he laid down to rest.

"It's the same for the woman you call Marida. We can grant her the freedom, provided if ou play along or not. I won't force you any longer. You better think for yourself regarding what is the best thing to do."

Banagher thought about it before. Also, he told them that the new coordinates were pointing to space. However, the details would have to wait until Audrey was released. If they want to know the exact

coordinates, they would have to return Audrey to Neo Zeon—he knew very well that this was a lopsided deal against his favor. It had been two days since Alberto said these words, and though Banagher had been threatened a few times afterwards, they had not contacted him for the last 12 hours or so. He was wondering if they were preparing to enter space, but in fact, the ship was already moving. The sunset-lit ocean surface could be seen moving from right to left on the communication panel, which captured the video feed from the external camera.

Banagher once saw something resembling a desert landscape through the gaps between the clouds the previous day. That was possibly the African continent. On that African land, he once went near the border of left and death with Zinnerman, and met Loni. *What's Loni doing now?* Banagher thought blankly. He felt that he heard Loni's voice when he was facing against the mobile armor. Her last thoughts entered his heart, telling him to fire at the source of the grudge—

The chilling sweat permeated out, causing his body that was resting on the bed to go cold. He did not want to think about it any further. Even if he spent his effort thinking about it, he would be unable to do anything at all. No matter where this ship was going, he would be brought to space sooner or later. With Audrey being held as a hostage, he would be forced to lead the way for those searching for the "Box". He did not believe that he could remain silent forever, and he had a premonition that if he were to meet Audrey the next time, he would probably reveal everything—even if she did not wish for it, despite this being a betrayal to the wills of the many people residing in him and the thought demanding him 'to do what he felt he had to do'.

Amongst the thought processes within him, the one that he could not differentiate as either himself or others…was the outsider called Marida Cruz. Her poker face appeared in his mind together with the black "Unicorn", causing him to exert more strength on the arm resting on his eyes. Her cold eyes when she blocked his path looked like a completely different person's. He could not sense the feeling of loss within her, only a thorough hollow feeling. Cyber-Newtype? Readjustments? He did not understand. He did not want to admit that humans could be reformed like this. Humans do change, but that was different; that way of changing humans was different; that was definitely something that was not to be done to someone else.

Perhaps the human's will is to this extent. In the future, where I know that people I get involved with can betray me and abandon everything, will I being reformed gradually? How do I determine the differences between change and reform? Is there a point in differentiating them?

Humans' wills are just something that can be transplanted or shed off by other people's hands. What is the meaning of using this kind of thing to differentiate between good and evil…?

The sound of the door being unlocked rang, and his thoughts that were going nowhere were interrupted. *Is it an interrogation again?* Banagher moved his slow moving head as he got up from the bed. Upon seeing the face of the man standing at the door, he made a small gasp.

Standing over there was a man in Federation officer uniform. He was probably around 40 years old…or maybe a tad younger. His black eyes, similar to his hair color had a glint in them, making him look relatively young. He had a mature look, but his clear eyes had the determination of a youth.

"I want to talk with you. May I?"

His back was straightened like a soldier, but there was a tinge of gentleness that could be heard from his voice. Banagher hardly had a proper talk with the crew on the ship after he was detained here, and he nodded as he got off the bed immediately without looking away. The man glanced outside to chase off the Foundation's guards, walked into the room, closed the door, and spoke.

"I'm Bright Noa, the captain of this ship."

The man reached his hand out as he looked around the room that was lit only with the spotlight for nighttime use. Banagher understood that the other man was worrying if there were any surveillance cameras, and gave a look with his eyes, telling the other man not to worry as he too reached his hand out. The man who called himself Bright showed a smile as his sturdy hands clasped Banagher's hand firmly.

"I'll be ashamed to admit that I still have to worry about being eavesdropped on in my own ship."

Bright sat down on the bed as he glanced at the communication panel. The light grey clouds filled the 10-inch monitor, probably because the ship had just risen in height. "I increased the speed of the ship slightly. We'll reach Sydney Bay in the afternoon tomorrow." Bright explained, but Banagher did not know what to make of these words as he merely looked at the side of the other man's face.

"We'll stop at a place called Torrington Base, and the role of the "Ra Cailum" will end there. You'll most probably end up going to space with those Foundation people."

"I'm not going to space on this ship?"

“Our relationship with the Foundation isn’t good. They won’t let us search for the treasure with them.”

Bright shrugged as he said simply. His relaxed attitude would make one suspect if this was a trap to lower Banagher’s guard, but the latter did not feel this deliberate action from the other man’s bitter smile. Also, there certainly was a relaxing atmosphere inside the room. Banagher exhaled a little and sat on the chair.

“Before this, there’s something I want to ask you. You’ve been working with Neo Zeon after arriving on Earth, and yet you came out on your own during the Dakar incident and fought that mobile armor with Ensign Riddhe. Why is that?”

“Why…because I felt I had to stop it.”

“Did you escape from that disguised trading ship “Garencieres”?”

“It’s not right to say that I actually escaped from it. I felt that they deliberately sent me out. Even the captain of the “Garencieres” can’t accept that kind of operation.”

Banagher expressed his doubts in the form of words simply as he probed his face that still had the bruise from the punch. He heard that there was no news of the “Garencieres” after Dakar. *If he knows that Audrey and Marida are here, Zinnerman will—* Banagher suddenly had this thought and felt that it was useless to think deeper into this as he shook off that fierce-looking bearded face from his mouth. Bright gave an observing look silently, breathed out from his nose, “That’s right. It certainly seems that the “Garencieres” actions point to this.” he said as he clasped his hands.

“That means that you weren’t treated like a prisoner there, and you had the freedom to act on whatever you thought, right?”

“That’s…right. I didn’t feel that they were enemies like what the Federation said.”

“Why’s that?”

“I’m not a soldier…so I’m not used to determining who’s my friend or enemy. The atmosphere on that ship gave me the feeling that there’s no need for that. I didn’t feel the atmosphere of the “Sleeves” I felt in “Palau”, at least…I could feel enemy intent back instantly. I think it’s because of this that I could stay on the “Garencieres”.”

“In other words, they made you feel that you could talk with them?”

“Yes.” Banahger answered as he felt that Bright was trying to get

information on something as he turned his surprised look on the other man. After a short pause, Bright looked like he made some sort of decision as he got up. “I understand. Thank you.” He said as he gave an unfettered smile.

“You’re so young, but your observation and expressive skills are rather impressive. I suppose your parents taught you very well.”

Banagher knew that this was merely a social formality, but these words still felt heavy to him, who was once described as ‘a Cyber-Newtype created by Cardeas. Once he saw Banagher lower his head, Bright seemed to realize that he touched on something he should not have mentioned, “Sorry for talking too much here”, he quipped, and walked past the boy. Banagher watched the other man head straight for the door, “Please wait!”, and hurriedly got up from the chair.

“If you’re the captain, can you let me meet Audrey…Princess Mineva?”

“Unfortunately, my power alone can’t help you. In reality, I had to put in quite the effort just to get to talk to you.”

The face of the man who answered apologetically without asking for the reason caused Banagher’s heart to ache. “Is that so…” the boy slumped back onto the bed again.

Those pair of emerald eyes suddenly appeared in his eyes in “Industrial 7”. Once he tried to sort out his past experiences, Banagher felt an inexplicable sense of unfamiliarity with her again. He wanted to meet her; he wanted to see those eyes looking at him again in a place where he hoped no one could disturb them. The origin that sent him to this moment, those eyes may probably allow him to swallow the change and reform within him, and revert him to his initial emotional state—Banagher clasped his hands together and looked over at the dim floor. “Don’t give up.” However, Bright said.

“Your eyes have strength, a look of determination that can turn difficulty into nutrients, just like the generation of pilots who used to pilot “Gundams”. As long as you don’t give up, the opportunity will definitely come.”

This was not a reasoning based on perspective alone as Bright’s voice sounded like he had experience with this. Banagher looked back at the contemplating face, immediately looked down, “No…I don’t have that power.” he eked out this voice as he murmured.

“Everything was just out of coincidence. I got onto the “Unicorn”, I ended up waiting here…all because of coincidence. If it were someone with the power, he’ll definitely handle it better. He’ll be active enough to

lose himself and help others, while I…"

I can't even save myself, let alone Audrey or Marida. If you're trying to say that I'm a Cyber-Newtype, this would be too much of a joke. Banagher bit his lips hard as he resisted the urge to let his emotions explode and closed his eyes. After a short moment of silence, Bright's hand was placed upon his shoulder lightly, "The "Gundam" pilots in the past were all like this too." This calm and steady voice caused Banagher's eardrums to resonate.

"It was already difficult for them to live as the situations continued to change drastically…whether or not they exist, the overall situation would not change. Ultimately, an individual being does not have the power to save the world."

The self-loathing expression could be seen in Bright's eyes as he narrowed them unhappily. He did not look at Banagher, who lifted his face to look back, and suppressed some sort of emotion as he turned towards the door.

"However, some people were saved because of their existence. Even if their names aren't widely famous, there are some incidents that will remain in the world, and this is the truth. Individually, we are helpless, but individual wills united together can also drag the world from the dark abyss. I suppose the symbolism of the "Gundam" is definitely about that kind of power. When the world's conflicts reach its climax, they will appear from somewhere and link people together, whether they are ally or foe…the basis of that will always be the power of humanity. This is the power of the will, to face the still world while still trying to use their hearts to interact with people. Don't be crushed by the situation. If you're a "Gundam" pilot too…a Newtype, you should summon your courage and force back the thoughts of despair."

Bright looked back and showed an earnest look for a fleeting moment, and before Banagher could ask back, he immediately walked off and opened the door. Banagher watched the back disappear through the door without looking back and vanished on the other side of the door; and looked down at his hands lit by the reflected light of the monitor.

Those were weak hands that could not do anything. No matter what kind of people the past generations of "Gundam" pilots were, they were definitely no different. They definitely faced these kinds of situations when they used their powerless hands to touch others, to support others, to kill others occasionally, and kept the one and only thing that could make the decisions for them—the heart. No matter what kind of cruel reality they witnessed, they could continue on by saying, "Even so".

Banagher clenched his hands, warmed by a heat sensation, and looked at the monitor of the communication panel. He saw the white patch of clouds that expanded beyond the horizon, and nothing more. The white cloud vapors covered everywhere, and he could not tell where they were…but that would not continue forever. If he kept on running, he would be able to escape sooner or later. *I can't give up, I have to look at the situation clearly*—Banagher made this decision. *That's because, the chance to break through will definitely fall onto me.*

Even if it's merely an amicable feeling, even if it's knowledge others tell me that cause me to feel this way, the heat sensation from these hands is definitely from within me. Banagher felt that it was okay to leave it like this for now as he stared at the white space outside. The mist that flashed by and disappeared paused, and he saw the orange sunlight overlap upon the clouds.

Part 6[edit]

For a short fleeting moment, the sun shone in on the white bright window in a burning manner, but immediately disappeared after the clouds covered it again.

The clouds were thicker than expected. If the weather report was correct, the clouds here would flow into Sydney Bay the next time. The skies above Torrington Base would likely be overcast. *Is this good or bad for the operation*—Zinnerman thought carelessly, concluded that they would know tomorrow, "How's the situation?" and then asked the Flaste on the navigation seat. "No deviation in course." The answer rang through the cramped bridge of the "Garencieres".

The "Ra Cailum" is definitely headed for Torrington Base. Local time of the estimated arrival time is 1330, no change at all."

The Minovsky Radar caught sight of the "Ra Cailum" light spot, and the reaction ring showed it heading from above the Indian Ocean to the Sunda Islands. The vague ring had a radius of 1000km, but there was definitely a ship indicated by the source of the Minovsky Particles in the circle, and it was not exceptionally difficult to deduce where the ship was headed. They had been eavesdropping on the satellite feeds from the "Ra Cailum" and the Federation Senate Council for 4 days, and Zinnerman again felt that the time was ripe as he turned to look beside the captain's seat. Two men dressed in old Republic army fatigues were leaning at the wall not far behind.

They were Lieutenant Commander Yohem Kirks and Lieutenant Kandle, two men discovered in the forests of the New Guinea region.

They were brought up onto the ship together with their beloved machines, and though it had been two days, both men still seemed to be unused to the change in situation as they showed inexplicable looks at the bridge like they were kidnapped by aliens. Kirks himself should be around 50 years old, but Kandle was probably in his 30s. Both men were dropped down from the Zeon Republic to Earth 17 years ago, and managed to live on after defeat after defeat in battle. *It's like pus surging out after the war. What's their view of us here?* Zinnerman did not think too deeply into this and handed the wireless communicator microphone to Kirks.

"This can call in your comrades by processing information into codes. Do you want to try calling them out, commander?"

Upon hearing that sarcastic greeting, Kirks rolled his eyes and glared over at Zinnerman, "Are you really going to attack?" he growled, but Zinnerman merely shrugged in response.

"We have 8 outdated mobile suits here. Combining that with the machines you have, there's still less than a dozen. The machines on that Federation ship are all brand new, right?"

"That seems to be the case."

"And there are guards at the base."

"Most likely."

"Even if I'm being courteous here, this really isn't smart. It'll be wiser to sell you off to the Federation and ask them to spare us."

Kirks' stiff voice caused Kandle, standing beside him, to turn his nervous stare around the bridge. Zinnerman spotted Flaste and Alec turning their heads slightly too as he answered, "You'll make the call, commander."

"You can return back if you want to. We'll send you over if there's a place willing to keep you. I don't hate the view of preserving ourselves since I take care of my subordinates this way, but…"

Zinnerman glanced aside at Kirks' wavering stare, and looked right back at him, saying, "In that case, why are we still playing the Zeon card? If we want to be smart about this, there are still many ways to go about doing this, and yet we willing let ourselves become terrorists for hire…I really don't know. This is really hard to understand."

Zinnerman turned around and kept back the microphone dangling in the air, but before he could put it back onto the console, Kirks acted faster as he snatched it away and gave a cursing look at the other

man. *That's good. In terms of not knowing how to live smartly, I'm no different from Kirks.* Zinnerman did not need to affirm the thoughts they had as he heard Kirks' voice through the microphone.

"This is the commander informing all Shinbu base members. With regards to the 1248 command issued yesterday, we'll take the planned action. The planned objectives are as follows. 1, capture the Federation mobile suit called the "Unicorn", 2, ensure the safety of the "Unicorn" pilot, and 3, once 1 and 2 are complete, ensure that we have an escape route…"

Part 7[edit]

(As we all know, our forces aren't sufficient. Also, this operation isn't permitted by the Neo Zeon fleet itself. This action is initiated by Captain Zinnerman and all the volunteers on the "Garencieres" forces. Thus, everyone has the right to refuse to take part in this operation. We originally planned to abandon our base and scatter our remaining forces to different places. I dare say that up till now, even if the "Sleeves" requested us, we do not have the duty to follow.)

This voice was not codified within the "Garencieres", and what reached the crew's ears was the instant moment the voice entered the speakers. The men working at the mobile suit deck paused the work they had for the time being and listened to this broadcast attentively.

On the lower deck of the aft, the 2 "Geara Zulus" that originally belonged to the "Garencieres" and the only "Zee Zulu" recovered from the Dakar operation located within. To all the crew members, who had been involved in every single incident ever since the "Industrial 7" incident, they were already mentally prepared with regards to the operation they were about to initiate next. They pricked their ears to listen to the broadcast as they continued to maintain the machines that were worn out due to the continuous battles. However, there was a different situation in the upper deck of the ship's bow.

The upper deck that had the "Unicorn" up till a few days ago now had Kirks' "Zaku I sniper-type" and Kandle's "Zaku Cannon", fastened in the hangar, facing back to back. The ones in charge of maintaining them were the 10 soldiers from the Shinbu base, and they stopped all that they were doing as they earnestly listened in on what their base commander had to say.

They were planning to abandon the base and start what was deemed a new life, but the chances of revival suddenly descended upon time before the moment they embarked on the future full of uncertainties—no matter the outcome, they believed that this would be Zeon's last

battle on Earth. They wanted to forget everything and bury their heads, but they had spent far too long of a time living on Earth. Some were looking at the photos of their wives left on their homelands, some recalled the faces of the family members they gained on Earth, and the solemn time rained upon the deck as they determined where they should go.

(However, the new enemy mobile suit in the operative is said to have the secret information regarding a “Laplace Box”. It has the information that can topple the Federation, and not only the Federation, but all forces, are tracking down its location. These words may seem impossible to believe, but I want to make a bet on it. I believe that this operation can allow us to go off with a bang, and also give a final offering from us to Zeon.)

2,000km away from the “Garencieres”, the trading ship “Evergreen” was moving down the Southeast Australian coast as it heard this announcement. This ship that was 200m in length and had a capacity of 5000 tons, was a company on paper, set up by the Luio Chamber of Commerce, a normal trading ship used for transporting industrial goods. However, the one steering it at this point were the people that escaped from the Shinbu base. The captain converted the received codes through a translator and broadcasted Kirks’ voice through the speakers on the ship. The pilots and mechanics of the Shinbu squad were on the cargo deck below the open-air deck, listening in. Two Dom-types were lying in a corner of this dim cargo deck, and there were a lot of goods piled up over these machines, covering their massive frames. One of the Dom-types was a mass production suit in the later era, the “Dwadge”, while the other was a “Dom Tropen” modified for hot terrain use. The “Dwadge” was upgraded to with 3rd generation specifications, but the “Dom Tropen” was a single unit built without an all-view monitor. Thus, the pilot could only listen in on Kirks’ voice in that narrow cocpit.

It was the same for the “Zaku Mariner” right below the “Evergreen” as it moved at a depth of 30m. This machine was modified for amphibious use, and had an all-view monitor installed within the cockpit, but the sight of the large engine propulsion moving the water still looked rather crude. The “Zaku Mariner” pilot too heard Kirks’ voice from the cable extended from the bottom of the “Evergreen”. Two “Capules” amphibious units were right behind, connected by cables as they moved under the sea with lights on their heads.

The limbs of the “Capules” were all kept within its round body when diving, looking no different from a ball. Overall, it really did not look like

a mobile suit. The “Capules” pilots were considered youngsters amongst the Shinbu’s regiment that was primarily comprised of old soldiers from the One Year War, who ended up left on Earth after the first Neo Zeon war. Even so, it had been 8 years since they were deemed as defeated soldiers. They once managed to escape from the space base “Axis” successfully and join the rising Neo Zeon, but ended up with the ironic fate as the remnant forces from the One Year War—they went through 8 years, and even the term turbulent would be an empty way of describing them. Their expressions were similarly tense as they listened in on the commander’s voice. What kind of result would happen from this visit? The heavy time continued in this pitch black darkness, as even their fates were still undetermined.

(I hope that everyone can put their hands on their chests and ask this question. Why is it that we never gave up on being Zeon soldiers? We missed out on chances to start something many times, and on one hand, we’re even despised as mercenary terrorists. Even so, we continued to be Zeon soldiers. What is the meaning in this? What others view about us isn’t the problem; the answer lies within our own hearts. We choose to deny or affirm our future lives. Now, what do we want to do? I hope everyone understands that this choice can decide our past and future.)

There was a twin-engine transport craft flying above Australia, 1000km west of the “Evergreen”, on the way from Tanzania in Africa as it ferried processed fish. However, half the storage space were not frozen food, as they were several supplies they exchanged in New Guinea—the 20m humanoid machine—this large body nearly exceeded the payload as it laid down in a frustrated-like manner.

The installed missile pods were protruding out on the shoulder, and the mono-eyed flat head of the “Galluss-K” looked to be embedded into the body itself. During the first Neo Zeon War, The “Galluss K” was once used as an elite troop for the invasion on Earth, and was sent onto the land from the space asteroid “Axis”. Its arms had a mechanism to allow it to punch, and had many fixed armaments, and most notably, the K-type left shoulder had an additional beam cannon with a long barrel. The J-type’s finger launcher machine guns were removed, but the recoilless cannon nicknamed the Giant Bass still had quite the firepower. The machine was designed to be able to deal with all sorts of situations, and it could handle close-ranged combat to long-ranged combat.

This was the latest second generation mobile suit in the Shinbu squad, but it had been a while since the resupplies were done, and after one

use, it would be hard to assure that it would be fine during the next sortie. The pilot and the mechanics assigned to it were focused on the final inspections. To them, the option of starting over in a place willing to accept them had already disappeared from their hearts.

(It's good to abandon the past and leave in a new future. I feel that it's something that can only be done with courage. However, I don't want to deny my past. If the past was meaningless, I want to end this meaningless life. This is my own thinking, and you don't have to accompany me. I hope that you can make the best choice for yourself. This incompetent commander can only send you these final words. No matter what path you take, I still want to earnestly thank everyone who had been following me. Sieg Zeon…that's all.)

Part 8[edit]

The ship descended in height, and after the final cloud became mist and floated above them, the surface of the Sydney Bay suddenly appeared in their eyes.

They descended from 800m in height and continued to descend. As the ship had already slowed down to its original speed, one would be fine even if they were to appear on the open deck. Riddhe waited for the immigration surveillance to deploy as he came to the open deck together with the inspector on standby. The bridge back made it possible to shelter him from the wind, but the winds blowing upon his face was still very cold. The Tri-Stars zipped up their flight jumpers from their chests as they too accompanied him, and like tourists who were visiting without thinking, felt suspicious about this unexpected cold as they looked down at the Sydney Bay below them. In fact, it seemed that they did not think about how the seasons would be different in the South as compared to the North, and thought that it was merely a difference between the climates. The day was May 6, and it was in mid-autumn.

Basically, the reason why they felt cold was not simply because of the temperatures. Riddhe looked past the nozzles of the main thrusters protruding right below his eyes as he stared down at the land that was on the distance horizon. The tea-brown color that appeared faintly in the cloudy day looked like the shadow of an island when looking from the ocean. However, what was surprising was that there was a curve expanded to both left and right side, creating a thing veil on both left and right sides of the horizon as well. "Hey, there's really a round hole there." Watts leaned his body out from the handrails as he said this with a rather pale expression, in stark contrast from the usual teasing tone.

“Is this the place where the colony dropped?”

“800km diameter, said to be one-sixteenth the size of the entire Australian continent; well, an entire area of land was blown up from the old Sydney to the inland…”

Daryl answered beside them as he tensed up his slightly tanned Latin face. Riddhe felt the cold air remain in his chest as he turned his sights to the shadows of the land. Right, this place was not the ocean in the place. As the landscape around the place had seemingly indicated the place, the “Ra Cailum” had approached the skies above the Australian continent. 17 years ago, the “Island Iffish” space colony was dropped upon this place, causing Sydney to be dug up from the continent together with the state of New South Wales, and formed a huge crater in the southwestern side of the Australian continent. A part of the circumference overlapped with the coast in the past, and though it was directly connected to the Southern Pacific, the circle that was blown up inland looked more like a lake than a port. It was impossible to imagine that there was originally land on this place, the largest lake in the world ever since the world was born—and people stupefied over this scar of devastation instead of seeing it as a spectacular scene. But either way, this was too concealed to be considered a sea, and too open to be considered a lake; a certainty to confuse an observer’s sense of geography. It was a natural scene, but it could not fit in with nature, and could be considered a distorted space.

“But what happened to the land that was originally here? Is it blown up into space or something?”

It seemed that there were changes on the crust, and some parts were buried in the sea, while the majority was blown up into the atmosphere and still remains as dust in the skies. That’s why the horizon looks so blurry. It was said that the horizon could be seen very clearly when the weather was fine before that colony dropped onto Earth.”

“Such a large mass of land got blown up as dust floating in the air…” Watts retracted his upper body poking out from the handrail and cringed his shoulders. “I really don’t understand . those guys on Earth really don’t want to let go of this world.”

This line indicated the thoughts of Spacenoids, and Riddhe felt that it was a little unexpected as he turned his head around. Watts continued to look down at the sea surface at his feet without moving, and Nigel, who was standing not too far away, glanced over. His usual unconcerned expression was still hiding an intent to observe in the eyes. Riddhe found himself uneasy as per usual and started looking for a place he could rest his eyes on at a place closer in. he found

several objects protruding from the brown wasteland devoid of greenery.

That was most likely the debris of the colony. In the past, the coast of Sydney was blown off with a range reaching hundreds of kilometers, and the burnt black debris of the colony was still scattered upon the landscape like a tombstone. Riddhe once heard that the reason why this place was never replaced was because the crust had not stopped changing, and there was difficulty removing the debris scattered around. Some of the colony debris were several hundred meters in height, and such exceptionally large rubbish was something no large construct on Earth could compare to. If there was a need to talk about its one worth, it would be that this field of rubbish could be used as a modern obstacle course for mobile suit piloting training. One could certainly praise the Federation army for having quite the foresight to keep Torrington Base after the war, whether it was for the sake of obscurity, or that the land it was on could not be used for any other purposes. Perhaps it was because it set up as an Achilles heel, as its geography meant that it was isolated, that it was once attacked by Zeon remnant forces soon after the war, and was once used as a nuclear weapon storage site, something that was forbidden in the Antarctica Treaty. However, the media attention on it had become a thing of the past, and this base, which was treated as a nearly forgotten shanty until recently, could only be described as a remote place.

The base should be set up at less than 20km away from the coast, but they could not see any signs of it from the ship. There was nothing moving on the land that was shrouded under the clouds, and one would certainly mistake it for a barren land on Mars as it extended beyond the horizon in front of everyone. “There’s nothing here.” Watts said, and Riddhe had no disagreement about that as he merely stared at the continent that expanded beyond unwittingly. The clouds that were roaming down low, right above his head, were thick and heavy, seemingly lighting up a fire in his gloomy emotion.

“I suppose we’ve arrived on land now, and we can only think wildly in the base’s rest room at most. What do the people in Torrington normally do everyday?”

“Most likely, I think they’ll just chill out and enjoy nature. I head that the sunset at Sydney Bay is quite the unforgettable sight.”

“How boring…we’re going to continue hunting Zeon remnants after we let those Foundation people off at the base? I’ll really bore to death if I can’t find a place to spend the time. Besides, even if we don’t talk

about it, the air in the ship has been really stale."

Watts said as he gave a reproaching look at Riddhe, who had been getting used to this for the past few years. The latter decided to ignore the former's stare, "What I'm concerned is why they chose this place." And looked over at Nigel who raised the question.

"It seems that those people from the Foundation are intending to switch over to a space shuttle, but Torrington Base doesn't have any Mass Driver launch facilities. How do they intend to launch into space?"

Nigel did not respond to Riddhe's stare as he said that with an unconcerned look. "Maybe they'll probably use an equipped booster to launch into space?" Daryl answered with a bored tone.

"Torrington is really a backwater region, so even if the "Ra Cailum" is docked there, it won't be too conspicuous. It sure seems like an idea those people with ulterior motives will have."

"Maybe, but they're going to head into space with 2 "Unicorns" on it too. I don't think the Torrington Base had that kind of large space shuttle, and it's not easy to get one either. Maybe there's another way."

"Another way?" Watts asked, and Nigel pointed his chin silently into the sky. Riddhe followed Daryl and Watts' stare as he looked up and spotted two machines flying between the clouds.

The soft sound of the engines became louder, and the silhouettes of the two disc-shaped machines were gradually closing in. The lifting bodies of the two machines glided past, leaving beside a rotor sound right above the "Ra Cailum" as it disappeared into the clouds. "What's that? Some Base Jabber?" Watts reached out his short neck hard as he watched the machines leave and muttered, while Nigel answered, "No." as he stopped looking for the machines in the sky.

"That's a transformable mobile suit. I think it's a new elite machine of the Federation army, called the "Anksha". Read through the data before."

"Ah, the next generation machines following the Asshimar-type? I heard that it could transport mobile suits in its transformed form."

Daryl said. Riddhe himself recognized the "Asshimar"; it was a transformable mobile suit type with a unique shape, and was assigned to important points on Earth 10 years ago. Once its round head and arms were retracted in, the upper body of that mobile suit would show a disc shape, like an illusion. He recalled how shocked he was when

he saw it on the news for the first time. To the Federation after the war, the “Asshimar” was a machine that hardly had the chance to operate effectively under gravitational conditions, but that was still not the driving force behind Riddhe’s willing to join the air force. To a plane hobbyist, this round-disc flying mode was complete unorthodox and simply ridiculous.

The “Anksha” seemed to be the successor, and the legs below the disc were made to be more aerodynamic in shape, and the sides of the lifting body seemed to have two long barrels of beam launchers. Riddhe was not very certain, but he could see a platform used to ferry a mobile suit on top of it. “Torrington Base has that kind of thing?” Watts asked, and he and Riddhe looked over at Nigel. If this were the case, he would have to change his view on Torrington Base. “Who knows?” Nigel answered as he looked up at the sky shrouded in grey clouds.

“Most possibly…”

The wind blew by as it swayed his hair, and his eyes were hinting at other possibilities as he looked into the sky. Riddhe frowned and looked over at Nigel’s face that seemed to be hiding something.

Part 9[edit]

In terms of outcome, there was no need for Riddhe to correct his opinion on the Torrington Base. The local time was 1330, and the base took in the “Ra Cailum” that was expected to dock in. it was a place of paved concrete in a corner of the wilderness.

A desolate mountain range—naturally, these mountains did not originally exist. They were the rocks left behind from the impact—the base 2km wide was fenced up with the mountains at the backdrop, and the headquarters, barracks and hangars, these impersonal buildings were everywhere within this place. The garrison mobile suits in the hangar comprised of the old machines from the initial 3rd generation machines, but there was no sight of the latest “Anks”a" mobile suits. There was a little war memorial in the base, filled with the mobile suits’ debris that were exploded and burnt, but this was most probably the result of haggling over the expenses for the asphalt. The base did not look like it came to life, even with the flagship of the Londo Bell docked in here out of a sudden, but even when looking from afar, the operatives that were obviously demoted looked emotionally drained. It seemed that the barren sight at the end of the world was overlapped with the gloomy day as even the music from the welcoming band seemed melancholic.

The “Ra Cailum” turned the cooling plate at the bottom of the ship 90 degrees inwards and landed on the temporary dock located at the western end of the base. There were countless landing pads on the docking ground, bearing the weight of the 500m long ship equally. However, though it was called a temporary dock, there was not a single wall around. The “Ra Cailum” was sitting in a corner of the base undefended, but there was no need to worry about it being spotted by anyone in this empty wasteland. Once the landing was done, Riddhe, Nigel and company got down to the mobile suit deck. The entire ship was to be on guard until the “Unicorn” and the “Banshee” were moved. Riddhe, who was still excluded from the squad, had to check the heavy repairs done to the “Delta Plus”.

This stop had to remain low profile, so all ceremonies of having soldiers lineup or the base commander invite them were omitted, but the inside of the ship was still in a frantic mess as the two mobile suits were moved out. The deck crewmen were all running around without rest, either packaging the spare parts of the “Banshee” or coordinating the large trailer moving the “Unicorn”. The shutter leading to the deck at the back were all opened, and even as the air outside was flowing into the mobile suit deck, Riddhe continued his own work. “We came all the way here, and they still want us to remain on standby? There has to be a limit to how cautious we can be.” Watts once complained, but his view would definitely change if he had known that Mineva Zabi was on this ship. Either way, it was a good thing for Riddhe now that he had a job he could focus on. He would not have to worry about any other thing during this time, and he would not have to curse himself for being unable to do anything or feel out of place for being unable to vent his frustrations.

Even till this point, he had not established contact with his father, and though he had looked for Captain Bright, the situation had not improve, and Mineva would definitely be taken to space with the people of the Vist Foundation. He spotted the large Medea-type transport carriers on the runway outside, and wondered, *how are they intending to head into space?* The white frame of the “Unicorn” was lifted by the two “Jestas” and laid down horizontally on the trailer, and as he glanced aside at this, Riddhe blankly let his mind thing. Unlike the “Banshee” that was moving into the “Medea” on its own, the “Unicorn” was dragged over by the trailer, and the reason for this was due to the only pilot, Banagher, refusing to work with the Vist Foundation.

That’s his style alright…he thought, but felt Alberto’s words appear in his mind again, and bit his lips in the cockpit alone. His rational side was telling himself that there was no reason for him to feel angry, but

he could not understand why he felt cheated, and this goosebump he could not leave alone continued to swirl in his heart.

That guy gave that ordinary look like he simply got involved in this—no, there was already an abnormal feel about him right from the beginning. If he really has the Vist bloodline, I can only describe my two battles alongside him as ironic. He's supposed to belong to the other side, but I got fooled by him saying 'you're a man of your word', and ended up knowing the fate of my cursed family. I'm like a clown performing here.

Is this the curse of the "Box" at work too? Riddhe ended up thinking back about the "Box" again, and just when he wanted to shake off this thought from his mind and gather his focus on the inspection, a familiar chestnut-colored hair appeared in the corner of his sights and he felt his heart, which had been beating loudly up till this point, suddenly went silent.

She, with that natural chestnut-colored hair on her, was flanked by the surrounding Vist subordinates in black suits, and was about to get onto the electric car parked at the deck. She appeared on a window of the all-view monitor that was fully switched on during this system check, and her back was clearly shown on it, and Riddhe's heart, which stopped once, started to beat wildly. He snuggled out of the cockpit like he was trying to leap out from it, and jumped onto the gondola parked beside the hatch. "AUDREY!" he immediately pressed the button to move the gondola down. "What now!?" Sergeant Hanna's voice rang from before, but Riddhe got down to the deck and yelled, "IT'S ME, AUDREY!" as he leapt off the gondola.

Mineva's eyes widened as she looked back, and she wanted to break away from the ranks, only to be restrained by the subordinates in black suits. Riddhe however did not care about Martha's piercing stare as she walked in front as he continued to dash down the mobile suit deck. Mineva could be seen occasionally through the gaps between the subordinates as they waited for the car to pass by, and just when RIddhe was about to see her face, "How troublesome", Alberto said as he got in front of them.

"I should have told you that you're not to see her, Ensign Riddhe."

Alberto's round face looked hideous, and the pilot of the "Banshee" appeared behind him. Her face under the black helmet looked like a watchdog that would leap at all criminals on her master's command. Riddhe stopped in his tracks, watched Mineva get accosted away from beyond Alberto's shoulders, and let out a restrained voice as he said,

“Just let me talk to her for a moment.”

“This is my issue with her. You don’t have the right to stop—”

“We DO have the right to stop you. I should have said before that we have to protect Her Highness Mineva.”

“You dare to say protect when you’re using her as a hostage!? Handle your family inheritance issues in the family! She shouldn’t be involved in such vulgar stuff!”

“If that’s the case, I do feel that it’s more vulgar of a Federation soldier to have a crush on her.”

Upon seeing the fat face sneer, an enraged Riddhe unwittingly walked forward. “Ensign Riddhe…!” Mineva, who was behind the “Banshee” pilot blocking him, was about to be carried up the electric car. *You’re the only one I’ll definitely protect. That’s what I promise. I suppressed my inner heart and came here just to protect you, but I can’t do anything. We won’t be able to meet again*—this premonition caused his gut to sink, “AUDREY!” and he yelled out without a care for anything else in the world as he merely thought of pushing aside this pilot in front of him and charge right at the electric car. The pilot quickly dodged, reached her arm to grab his arm from the side, and pulled him towards her by using the momentum of the charge. Surprisingly, Riddhe’s legs left the floor easily, and he spun half a round in the air as he landed on the ground.

The tall ceiling of the mobile suit deck appeared in front of Riddhe’s eyes, and the face of the black-suited pilot did not twitch as it appeared in front of him. The electric car door was slammed shut, and the sound of the engine grazed by as the car drove off. Riddhe did not have the time to feel pain, and his sense of rationality was immediately broken as he got up and grabbed the pilot.

“You puppet…!”

I won’t show mercy even if you’re a woman, Riddhe decided as he immediately reached his arm out at the pilot’s chest, but the pilot was faster as she grabbed Riddhe forcefully on the throat. Riddhe grabbed that springy hand and intended to pull it away, but he spotted some emotion flash by the bottom of the pilot’s eyes.

There was a dull light deep within that eyes that were reminiscent of hollows, and the azure blue eyes widened before she stopped moving. The strength of the hand grabbing onto the throat suddenly weakened, and Riddhe forcefully shook it off intently. The pilot backtracked due to the force of the release, and she showed a pained expression as she

put her hands on the helmet covering her head. A certain emotion flashed through the bottom of her void eyes, and her eyes which were then filled with life immediately closed up.

“What is it? Is your head starting to hurt again!?”

Alberto turned pale as he pushed aside the flabbergasted Riddhe and went to the pilot. The pilot pushed the hands away and reached her hands for the handrail of the trailer, only to collapse onto the floor. Her hand, pressing onto her head, was tensed up, and her trembling fingers were pressing into her helmet as she ostensibly tried to rip it out—no, she looked like she was trying to squash the skullcap together with it and rip out the brains inside.

“Call Bentner in, quick.”

On hearing Alberto’s restrained voice, the subordinates hurriedly turned around and left. Riddhe did not understand what was going on, and originally intended to look at the pilot’s face as she knelt down. “DON’T APPROACH HER!” Alberto yelled with spite and furor, shocking Riddhe enough to stop him in his tracks.

“It’s because you did too many excessive things that things ended up like this. That’s why I said not to let her take the same ship…!”

Alberto ignored the expressions on the subordinates’ faces as he showed his true emotions and glared defiantly at Riddhe. He then knelt down and got behind the pilot. “Excessive things, you say…?” Riddhe answered, but Alberto did not care about this response as he was only concerned with the pilot, and spoke, “Oi, hang in there. I’ll tell someone to move the “Banshee” there. Head there to rest.” Riddhe took a step back from the place, and looked over at the shutter leading to the aft of the ship. The electric car ferrying Mineva would head through the mobile suit deck in the ship, exit the landing deck on the aft, and head down onto ground. He wondered if there was any way he could catch up, and looked around the mobile suit deck, only to hear a vague cough-like hoarse voice enter his ears.

“The enemy’s, coming…”

He could barely hear these words, and Alberto inadvertently turned to look at the pilot, who shook off the arm on her shoulder as she got on her trembling legs and turned her unsteady eyes at a certain spot.

“This feeling, master…?”

She muttered, and her eyes showed anxiety as there was a certain will rising up from the dark hollow to the surface of her eyes gradually—

those were the eyes of a human. Riddhe followed the eyes that were suddenly full of life and stared at the pilot's face. "Wrong, I'm your master." Alberto immediately said as he got up, his pudgy back blocking Riddhe's sight.

"I'm your guardian, I'm the only one who can protect and support you. Repeat this with me, the "Gundam" is the enemy—"

Alberto grabbed the pilot's shoulders and looked right into her eyes. She turned her eyes, perplexed, and was attracted to his eyes as she repeated, "The "Gundam"…is the enemy". Her eyes lost all glow, and Riddhe, who did not understand the situation, suddenly felt that this situation simply felt weird as he backed away. At this moment, the alarm rang without warning, causing him to tense up.

The red alarm set on the wall flashed, and everyone working on the mobile suit deck immediately stopped. Riddhe exchanged looks with Alberto, felt a sense of discomfort within him, and was driven by it to respond as he dashed without waiting for the bright to broadcast the report.

He darted past the work vehicles transporting the materials and sprinted towards the "Delta Plus" on the hangar. He was not sure why this was happening, but after witnessing the abnormality of the "Banshee" pilot, he understood that something abnormal was about to begin.

Part 10[edit]

The coastline of Sydney was 4000km in length, but there was only one proper harbor. That place was a military port set up to accommodate the movement of the goods into Torrington base, and there were no coastline embankments or any wharfs other than that particular stretch of long coastline, and the area extended beyond the coast was the rock formation created by the waves and the wind pressing. The coast had become an empty wasteland, and the only ones moving to and fro the coast were the fish trawlers. The trading ships and so however were used to ignoring the port on this coastline, and would use the other existing ports. Naturally, the SOSUS system that was basically the radar network on the sea would not reach beyond the wide new coastline, but set around the military port.

The current time was 1408, and three mobile suits landed on the coast, approximately 30km away Torrington base was. The AMX-109 "Capule" used their cornice arms to puncture the weird lava-like object, let the hand manipulators with 5 claws stab into the crust, let its ball-shaped body look upwards, and let its chest armor open from right to

left.

The 8 missile launchers hidden inside were exposed, and light grey smoke trails covered its large body as the swarm of missiles fired out in unison, rising diagonally. Another “Capule” fired its missiles as well. A RMS-192M “Zaku Mariner” raised its Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) weapon on its hand and fired. 18 smoke trails drew an arc and charged right at Torrington base.

The sounds of the missiles flying over crossed the skies above the base’s fences and bombarded the combined industrial facilities at the south. The low round cylindrical tanks at the back were blown apart, and the flames and black smoke that rose were scattered with the cloudy skies in the backdrop. At that moment, a tremor shook the base, and the wind pressure and shockwave caused the war memorial beside the factory facilities and collapse. However, this was merely the start of the chaos befalling Torrington Base. The first wave of missiles ignited all over the base, and 2 warheads that came a beat later exploded above the base, releasing 16,000 little grapeshots down like a torrent instantly.

Each grapeshot was not really powerful, but they were scattered across 6 football fields worth of land, and were enough to case panic throughout the entire Torrington Base. The glass windows of the headquarters were shattered without exception, and the ceilings of the barracks were wrecked; the exploded road surfaces slammed upon the heads of the soldiers who were unable to escape in time. The base had anti-air missiles measures, but with the radars jammed by the Minovsky particles, they were completely useless. The base had no way to fight back other than seeing the missiles being fired and deploy men to shoot them down. it had been 2 minutes since the raid started, and the garrison mobile suits were given the issue to sortie.

“Why’s the enemy coming to attack such a rural base!?”

“All because that ship brought the enemy here!”

The pilot of the “GM II” looked at the large body of the “Ra Cailum”, lying in the temporary port, and let loose these words with a look of disgust. This line however actually revealed the true thoughts of all the stationed troops who were suddenly attacked. A RGM-79R “GM II” squad crossed by the door of the hangar, shot down by a direct hit, and was preparing to sortie. As the model number indicated, this was a product with minimal modifications from the machines in the One Year War, but it was still the main fighting force of the guards at Torrington Base. While the “GM II” were equipped with either beam rifles or hyper bazookas, the MSA-003 “Nemo”, a mobile suit developed at the

beginning of the 2nd generation , moved through the “GM IIs” and left the hangar as it lit its thrusters at where the missiles were coming from. A second wave of MLRS came swarming in, seemingly making up for the space left behind by the group of giants that jumped away, but the ones in charge of intercepting them was the “Guncannon DT”.

Torrington Base had been using “GM IIs” up till this point, and the upgrades to change their main forces to “GM IIIs” had been stalled; to it, the “Guncannon DTs” were important pieces to make up for the “GM IIs” lack of firepower. This was an experimental machine that ceased production after a few prototypes were produced, but the optical sensors for an artillery fight had good specifications, and were effective as movable cannons to assist in the base’s anti-air defenses. Once the garrison was launched, the three “Guncannon DT” on standby locked onto the missiles before they exploded. The support arms reached out from their backpacks, and they transformed into a cannon-firing mode to steady themselves as the two beam cannons on the shoulders aimed at the rockets firing over. The 4.7 Megawatt Mega Particles cannon boasted tremendous rapid-fire capabilities, and a rocket was shot down into an orange fireball. However, the second intercepting beam did not fire as another trail of fire was sniped at the “Guncannon DTs”, causing all three machines to be in chaos.

The MS-09F “Dom Tropen”, hidden at the rocks near the base, arrived earlier than the landing squad on the coast, and used this chance to wreck havoc as it started moving into the base from the east. The MS-09G “Dwadge” in the north moved in from the north. Both machines had hovers on their legs and charged into the base like an avalanche. The “Dom Tropen” let the Raketen rocket on its shoulder fire, which let an explosion trail of smoke near the feet of a “Guncannon DT”, and drew the beamsaber on its back as it continued to attack. The “Guncannon DT” tried to readjust its bearings, but it was already too late as the beam saber sliced off the head with the optical sensor and sliced through the cockpit at the back.

The “Guncannon DT” collapsed as its arms laid weakly, and the MLRS came swarming in from another direction at the “Ra Cailum”. Right before the small explosions occurred, the 3 main cannons located on the upper deck turned around and fired right at the missiles. The firepower of the main cannons far exceeded the mobile suits’ portable weapons, and the fire would probably affect the bases in its path, but there were no other effective anti-air measures in this situation. The “Ra Cailum” fired the thick beams that could be seen even in the day as it started to leave the ground. The CIWS weapons located all over the ship let out fires, intending to shoot down the “Dwadge” moving

quickly through the blind spots of the buildings, but this however caused a fatal damage to the “Ra Cailum” as it was too focused on the enemy machines invading the base.

A transport carrier flying in at low height dropped off a new mobile suit, the AMX-101K “Galluss K”, which crushed the ground as it landed, and started an assault from the west side of the base. The hyper-bazooka on its right hand fired together with the beam cannon on its left shoulder, and the mega-particles that were fired at sublight speed hit the “Ra Cailum” directly. The gantry crane of the temporary dock was melted, and the beam that shot through the ship from the rear portside blew the armor together with the bazooka shot, causing the engine department of the “Ra Cailum” to take tremendous damage. Thick smoke emerged out of the thruster nozzles, and the ship was rocked by an intense tremor as all unfastened items dropped onto the floor. The cranes dangling from the ceiling of the mobile suit deck swayed, and even the “Jestas” that were ready to launch could only sway their large bodies.

“A direct hit?”

“We need them to stop the cannon strikes! We can’t launch like this!”

Squad leader Solton had already arrived onto the catapult deck, but the CIWS machine guns were firing in his launch path, and he could only shout out. Nigel looked past the back of the commander’s machine and used the all-view monitor to lock in on the enemy machines rampaging through the base. He saw two Dom-type machines skillfully dodging the fires raining down from all directions and firing back with their rockets once they had the chance—

“They’re using such old machines…”

He did not feel that the enemy was looking down on them. Once he realized that the enemy was going to attack even with such mobile suits, he gulped, his saliva full of bitterness.

This fear too struck the defense unit that was advanced to the coast. They continued to jump, and once they witnessed the strange rock formation melt due to the high heat, they realized that the enemy had already launched another squad to attack the base.

“Hozumi’s “DT” is down! The enemies here are just bait!”

“Get the “Ra Cailum” people to deal with them. They have such high-specs mobile suits after all.”

This line from the leader became the immunity required for the defense

unit to continue on. The unnatural rocks were each as tall as a mobile suit, and the visibility in the area was rather bad. The leader split the squad into two teams, used the tactic of moving and cover each other, and drove his rouge-colored “Nemo” approximately 1km forward. The 5 mobile suits that formed team A stopped in their tracks as they got into a formation to cover, and the leader gave the signal for B team to move forward. The B team moved through the same path while moving through the weird rocks, but before the A team could move forward, a wire-like object flew in from a blind spot, causing the “Nemo” leader suit to lost its footing and fall.

The “Zaku Mariner” pulled the magnetic harken from its left arm sleeve and appeared from behind the rocks as it raised its missile launcher and fired at the “Nemo”, which took a direct hit and exploded into flames. The “GM II” beside it frantically raised the beam rifles and fired back. Though the mega particle shot pierced through the rock, the “Zaku Mariner” continued to use its magnetic harken as it quickly moved, and another beam that shot in from another direction hit that “GM II” directly. As the “GM II” was engulfed in light and slammed into the rock, the “Zee Zulu” wielding a beam machine gun in its left hand darted out from the smoke, and leapt at the gunner “GM II” wielding a hyper bazooka. It kept low, dodged the bazooka shot, charged at the enemy, swung its claws down to sever the head of the “GM II”, before leaping into the air.

Everything happened in an instant, and B team could not create covering fire in time. Another explosion rose from the other “Nemo”, and the B team leader immediately ordered the team to scatter. Since they were ambushed, them gathering together would be the fastest way to their own demise. There was no mistake in the team leader’s judgment, but in other words, that action was also within the enemy’s prediction.

The cornice arm with many joints swung down, and the tip of the claws were stabbed into the chest of the “Nemo”. The “Capule” dug out the moveable frame together with the armor, tossed aside the first enemy unit, and let the beam eye on its head fire. The goggle-shaped main camera was shot through, and the other “Capule” saw the crushed rocks and the falling “GM II” in the corner of its sights as it fired the mega particle cannon on its abdomen. The seawater loaded in the dual-layered armor could be used in the cooling system, which allowed the amphibious machines to use a power generator that had a higher power output than an ordinary machine. The mega particles that was released caused the rocks to evaporate, create new explosions, and an array of beams, including the defense team’s, was crossing through

the place.

Kirks, who was in the cockpit of the “Zaku I”, did not see this light as he was on the “Garencieres”, closing in on Torrington Base from the Southeast direction. It poked its upper body from the opened upper deck hatch and raised its sniper rifle to aim. The machine’s optical sensor had already caught sight of the “Ra Cailum” that was currently the size of a fingernail. The white frame of the “Ra Cailum” was giving off smoke in the aft and a sitting deck in the west side of the base, an that was the only object on the precision scope Kirks pulled to his sights.

“Good boy. Don’t move there…”

He muttered as he aimed, and at that moment, the ship in the scope let out a flash, and a thick beam of mega particles grazed by the “Garencieres”. It seemed that the enemy had already spotted the location of the sniper. One shot would be enough to blow the cover. But it was impossible for the enemy to detect them under the presence of Minovsky Particles. In contrast, Kirks had an outstanding optical equipment produced by the Khanom Company. The ship that was hit by the scattered particles continued to shake, and Kirks could not handle the shaking even if he zeroed his scope, but he still managed to catch sight of the “Ra Cailum” in his cross hair. He adjusted the beam output by checking the distance, angle and atmospheric conditions, and the moment the crosshair moved across the target, his finger on the trigger exerted some force.

The sniper rifle took in the power output from the sub-generator the unit was carrying on its back, and the beam came out from its nozzle. Kirks did not think too much into the explosion of light within the scope as he adjusted the angle by millimeters before firing again. There was a second explosion on the bow of the “Ra Cailum”, and once he spotted the smoke coming out from the two main cannons, Kirks felt the sensation he had forgotten for a long time surge through his body. *I’m not dead yet. My machine and I are still alive!* Kirks exclaimed in his heart as he was so pumped up he pushed the scope in front of him aside, “We’re going, Kandle!” and spoke up into the wireless communicator within the helment.

The hatch above the ship opened, and Kirks’ “Zaku I” leapt through it and jumped down to the surface, followed by Kandle’s “Zaku Cannon”. Both machines ignored the “Garencieres” flying over their heads as they landed in the debris of the colony in the wasteland. They then stepped on the steel bars buried in the sand as they glided into the debris.

Kirks had already known that this field of debris was used by Federation units as a training ground. It was 600m in height and less than 200m long in length and wide. If one were to include this information and the distance of approximately 30km to the base in the estimations, this section of what used to be a space colony could become the perfect sniping location. Kirks inspected the condition of the “Zaku I”, got into sniping position, “I’ll leave all incoming enemies to you.” And notified Kandle’s machine.

“My machine here is a tortoise with a heavy bag here. I’m doomed if some nimble new enemy suit comes running in here.”

(Roger that. I won’t allow any machine to approach.)

The “Zaku Cannon” slid down to a position lower than Kirks’ machine and chose a position to spot, and used its hand manipulators to pull the strap of the big gun on its backpack. (Just focus on your job, commander.) Upon hearing these words from the other unit, Kirks surmised by saying, “Don’t die before you can see your kid’s face.”, and shook off everything other than sniping from his mind. He first activated the auxiliary equipment on its right knee, and once the “Zaku I”, which was stabilized, got into a sniping position, he aimed the muzzle of the sniper rifle into the gaps between the materials. He could spot Torrington Base, lying in a midst of black smoke, through the crosshair of the precision scope.

After the main cannons on the bow were taken care of, the “Ra Cailum” was left with only the main cannon on the aft of the upper deck. If the ship did not leave the ground, the main cannons at the bottom would be useless. Once the main cannons were nullified, the enemy would have no firepower, either from the ship or the base, to snipe them down. Kirks would first have to shoot down the last main cannon to cover the “Garencieres” flying straight at the base. He moved his reticule slightly and began his first assignment. The sub-generator of the “Zaku I” rumbled, and the sniper rifle that was as long as the height of an enemy unit let out a beam.

The beam that could be spotted from the “Garencieres” was absorbed directly by the “Ra Cailum”, and the aft immediately showed an explosion, indicating a direct hit. Zinnerman saw the light of explosion from the other side of the moving clouds. There was a “Geara Zulu” dragged out with the hangar from the aft of the ship, and when viewed from the machine’s cockpit, the colony debris Kirks was hiding in looked like a skyscraper in the middle of the desert.

“That commander sure is skilled.”

Kwani, seated on the linear seat, smiled as he said, but there was no need for anybody else to mention it. Kirks was able to skillfully pilot a mobile suit dated 20 years back and still hit the enemy's cannons. Zinnerman moved his body that was fastened down on the cramped assistant seat as he looked at the colony debris that was gradually moving away from him, *don't expose yourself too much,* and muttered in his heart before he turned his face. His hand touched the collared shirt he was wearing as he spotted the "Ra Cailum" that was gradually becoming bigger in front of him. Once he stared upon the ship that was still protected by its numerous CIWS guns despite the loss of the main cannon, Kwani's voice rang in his ears, "Sure fits you here."

Zinnerman saw the teasing stare from Kwani through the helmet, and felt the fear that had risen within him melt away. Even without anyone say it, he himself understood that the combination of his bearded face and a Federation officer uniform was something even he would laugh at. At the same time, he recalled the look Besson, in the Ivan unit, made, "Don't get shot down. I won't be happy about dying like this when I'm dressed up in this state." and quipped back. "Roger that!" Kwani however answered with enthusiasm.

"I'm going. Don't bite your tongue there."

A voice rang, and the restrains on the hangar were released as the two "Geara Zulus" were dropped. Kwani did not see the "Garencieres" off as he let the free-falling machine adjust itself and fired at the ground with his beam machine gun. The beam pellets were absorbed by the "Ra Cailum", and the anti-air fire that was several times heavier than what was dealt came flying at the air. Zinnerman checked that the Ivan unit that descended was safe, exerted strength in his abdomen, and heard the sounds of machine guns that grazed by.

The Federation reinforcements will immediately come in from the air. If we're flanked by the new mobile suits squadron of the "Ra Cailum", the remnant army will definitely not last long. Got to hurry—Zinnerman muttered in his fearful heart, and forced his fear behind and stared at the incoming "Ra Cailum". The ship that was firing its numerous anti-air guns was like a hedgehog created by the fires.

Part 11[edit]

BOOM! The impact rocked the ship, and it was different from the feeling felt when the beam rifle hit the ship directly. Bright unwittingly tightened his grip on the captain's armrest, looked back at the main screen of the battle bridge, and the scene that appeared on it shocked him.

Two “Sleeves” mobile suits landed on the bow deck of the “Ra Cailum”, intending to let their green bodies stand still. *Did the “Garencieres” drop them down as they passed by from above?* Bright forgot that he was still contacting the base commander as his mouth was slightly agape while he was trying to bellow. “THE ENEMY HAS BOARDED US! WHAT’S ALL THE CANNONS DOING!?” Meran however reacted faster as he yelled, his voice echoing through the battle bridge.

“Even if we can’t use the main cannons, we can still aim with the machine guns. Chase them away!”

“The mobile suit squad can’t launch because of the shots fired from the CIWS guns. Commander Solton’s squad hopes that the guns will stop firing.

“But stopping the attack in this situation is—”

Meran spoke up, but he was interrupted by the enemy unit swinging its beam hook down on the screen, and a tremendous shock and explosion struck the entire ship. The footage on the screen was interrupted, “Camera 45 is down!” “Switch back to the normal bridge camera!” the bridge’s key personnel were shouting. The battle bridge of the “Ra Cailum” was located lower than the ordinary bridge, and there were no windows in there at all. If the cameras were destroyed, there would be no way for them to know of what was going on outside, and the 6 bridge personnel looked like they were about to gasp, but that was before they switched over to the other cameras. The main screen was back to normal, and upon seeing the enemies from another angle, Bright heaved a temporary sigh of relief, “That’s why I’ve been telling you this!” and then growled into the receiver in his hand.

“Our engines or shot, and we can’t leave the ground even if we want to. Instead of that, please call back the defense squad mobile suits. The enemy suits at the coast are just decoys.”

(I’ve been doing that without you telling me! The “Ra Cailum” just needs to focus on how to leave this base. The enemy’s targeting you guys!)

In a corner of the main screen, the base commander could be seen on the communication window filled with noise, saying such things unabashedly. Naturally, he was an incompetent blockhead, which was why he was sent to this backwater region, but Bright could not seize the command and cause a confusion in the command chain. “We’ll leave once the engine department finishes its emergency repairs.” He

said patiently as he looked for the enemies that landed on the ship. A cannon strike then shot out from the bottom, and the machine that leapt out gradually disappeared into the blind spot of the camera.

“The enemy’s attacks are too intense, and we still can’t call back the civilians transferring over to the transport carrier. We’ll try our best to support, but we’ll need to base to cover us once the ship leaves. The base will be in trouble if anything happens to anyone related to the Vist Foundation, you know.”

It was not hard to imagine a commander, wanting to escape from his duty in this backwater region, would immediately follow an order issued directly from the Senate Council. The enemy unit was chased off by a launching “Jesta”, and could be seen retreating from the open air deck; “I-I understand!” the base commander was flushed with anger in a corner of the monitor.

(I’ll tell the defense squad to come back and defend…really, nothing good happens when we deal with “Gundams”!)

The commander let out these words that were either out of spite or his true thoughts as he cut the light. Bright was not willing to focus his attention on the fire as he checked the situation from the feed provided by the external cameras. They chased off the enemy units that climbed onto the ship, but the enemy units teamed up with the other 3 enemy units and were still within the base. Solton and the Tri-Stars were fighting, but the Medea on the runway was still isolated. It was thanks to the “Jestas” moments that the long-ranged sniper that shot down the 3 main cannons on the ship was held of.

The ones making an accurate sniper fire seemed to be an old machine, and was yet toying with the newest generation “Jestas”. Bright wanted to send a squad to take down the enemy sniper, but there was no meaning to it as that would weaken the defenses on the battleship and the transport carrier. It would be best if the base defense squad could return back for battle, but exactly how many friendly units could make it back safely—“This is certainly more thought out than we imagined.” Bright muttered to himself, and Meran, who seemed to have the same feeling, “Is the enemy aiming for Mineva Zabi?” whispered.

“If that were the case, they won’t be so reckless with their fire. They’re probably aiming to get the “Unicorn”…that’s quite the painful expense.”

Meran seemed to have heard Bright’s last line as he frowned in a perplexed manner. Meran did not know about Beltorchika’s information regarding movements of the Zeon remnants. *It can’t be helped,* Bright

concluded in his heart. If Meran were to know about it, he would refuse to dock at the base even if he had to reject the Vist Foundation's request, and the ship would have to remain in the air until the enemy's intentions were clear, which would be meaningless. Bright himself was prepared for the need to bear this sudden raid.

Of course, he had already taken emergency countermeasures beforehand, and even informed the base commander of the basis behind this probable attack. Now that the situation had become like this, even if the base commander had not paid serious attention to it, the remaining responsibility would naturally fall upon him. Bright himself did not expect such severe damage, but there were no casualties amongst the ship crew at least, and he did not intend to have any. *This isn't injustice or immorality,* Bright convinced himself and muttered, "It's about time." Meran frowned as his slightly tanned face showed a suspicious look.

"Meran, use the command code. Try and contact the closest Londo Bell ship."

"Huh? But all the Londo Bell ships are keeping watch over the colonies. The battleships we can immediately send over are…"

"Isn't there one? Right above us?"

Bright pointed at the top and gave Meran a look, and the lattered seemed to understand the former's intent as he opened his mouth, "Don't tell me that's…", he eked out a trembling voice. "This is an emergency, and any requests for aid will be permitted no matter how it looks. The Senate Council won't grumble over this either." Bright argued back and turned his confident look to the front, believing that they could only do this.

"No need to draft a statement. Make immediate contact with them. Once the circuit's connected, I'll personally speak up."

Part 12[edit]

"…Anyway, first, we have to calm down in this kind of situation."

Otto Midas picked up the red tea cup poured from the room staff officer as he looked at every person in the eyes and said. All the key personnel of the "Nahel Argama", including those under First Officer Liam Borrinea, gave him depressed looks.

"It's been 2 weeks and 4 days since we're ordered to standby on orbit around Earth. I understand that all of you may feel anxious, and it's inevitable that there are disputes amongst yourself, but as the leaders

of each department, you should remain calm even when taking action. The most important thing is to prevent any actions that will cause unrest amongst the crew and to conduct ourselves well…alright, drink up. This is a high-class red tea I finally managed to get. Forget everything as you're here, and let's enjoy this elegant tea time."

The full leaves from Quartier Latin, giving off a lavender aroma, were almost all used up, and Otto would have to endure with drinking using the bland tea bags until he was allowed back to "Luna II"—no, until he was allowed to return back to "Londenion" in side 1 and dine with his wife in the officer's residences. *At least taste it properly there,* he swallowed his grumbling that was about to come out from his throat, and took a sip from the tea cup. Everyone else then followed Liam, still showing no emotion, and slowly reached for their teacups.

Nobody was smiling at all. It had been half a month since the "Laplace" battle ended, and they were in orbit around Earth for more than half a month, so naturally, they did not have the mood to relax and drink tea. *How long until we can return back to the port? How does the Senate Council intend to deal with us?* The emotions that were building up for the past two weeks were about to explode from this silence, and a heavy atmosphere, far from elegance, descended upon them. At this moment, there was a notification alarm from the bridge, and every turned to the communication panel on the wall.

(Captain, there's an emergency message.)

Mihiro Oiwakken's tense voice overlapped with the sound of a certain person putting down his teacup violently. Otto however was not concerned by that sound as he glanced aside to look at everyone, who were looking at the communication panel excitedly, "Read it out." and answered with a calm tone. He personally believed deep in his heart that he was definitely panicking in his heart more than anyone else, but he still had to react calmly. No matter where the message came from, what kind of information it contained, it was imperative that he was to show his flair as a captain and accept it calmly. He used his fingers, which would tremble if he relaxed in the slightest, to hold onto the teacup, and took the bland red tea to his lips,

(Yes. From the "Ra Cailum", to the "Nahel Argama". Our ship is currently fighting against Zeon remnants in Torrington Base, need reinforcements. Open the direct communication line ASAP. That's all.)

Before Mihiro finished her words, Otto spat out all the red tea in his mouth.

Part 13[edit]

(Riddhe Marcenas, Romeo 008. Launching!)

Ensign Riddhe's voice could be heard from the opened wireless communicator, and the burst noise of the thrusters came from the ajar hatch. Since the enemy was right in front of them, there was no need to launch the machines from the catapult. Riddhe's "Delta Plus" flew off the catapult deck on its own power.

BOOM, SWOOSH…the sound of the mega particles being fired rang bellowed like a thunderclap, and the black "Unicorn"—the second RX-0 unit "Banshee" passed through the shutter leading to the catapult. *Is the one riding on it Marida?* Banagher looked up at the uniformly black mobile suit with the lone golden horn on the head as he wondered, and clenched his fists that were handcuffed. At a corner of the mobile suit deck, the heat released from the "Banshee" flowed into the blind spot of the trailer where the white "Unicorn" laid, and Alberto could be heard beside him, "Listen up, your first priority is to defend the Medea transport carrier." speaking into the wireless communicator.

"The substitute leader is on it, and she can't return to the ship because of the enemy attack. You have to ensure the safety of the transport carrier and eliminate the enemies…is your head still hurting?"

Banagher could not hear Marida's reply. "Good, don't force yourself." He looked at Alberto, who replied this and cut the line, from the corner of his eyes, and then looked up at the shutter gate where the "Banshee" walked out from. Once he passes through it, he would be able to see Audrey and the transport carrier that was still docked on the base's runway. The moment he thought about it, he felt uneasy, and his gut would tense up whenever the tremor of the explosion shook the ground; however, like the rest, he was in a situation where he was unable to move. He was to be brought up to the transport carrier together with the trailer as well, but the sudden enemy attack prevented him from leaving the ship, and he was unable to move within the mobile suit deck. The mobile suit squadron of the "Ra Cailum" had already launched to intercept, but the battle situation did not seem optimistic from what he heard on the wireless communicator. It seemed that the enemy units that invaded the base were not the only ones troubling them, and also included beams that were shot from long distance.

Who's the one attacking? Banagher looked up at the "Unicorn", lying on the trailer; the handcuffs attached onto his pilot suit rang as he was being pulled away, "Really, at this moment…" and stared at Alberto's back as the latter muttered. He could see the man with pudgy back supporting himself off the trailer and trembling slightly.

Maybe this man's emotions are rather delicate. Banagher had this thought again as he looked up at the states of the two black-clothed Vist subordinates flanking him, and at this instant, he suddenly had an idea he never thought before. He looked up at the "Unicorn", and thought, *can I do it?* and asked his throbbing heart. *If I don't move now, am I going to wait for my doom?* such a reply came to him, and he took a deep breath and turned his stare at Alberto's back.

“So even those who can control wars will feel scared?”

He moved all the muscles on his tense face as he showed a daring mocking smile. As expected, Alberto looked back in shock, “Who do you think is the cause of this…” and glared back to say to him,

“If you had listened to instructions obediently, we wouldn’t have needed to spend so much effort in getting trailer to move the “Unicorn”, right? If the ship didn’t need to land, we wouldn’t need to face the attack of those Zeon scrap metal. You’re really the plague.”

Alberto grumbled as he ranted everything at one go, only to suddenly show a startled expression, “Don’t tell me you planned this with those guys?” Banagher looked back at the fearful and doubtful eyes of the other man, “Even if I say it is, what are you going to do?” and gave a more sinister smile.

“Are you going to give up on finding the “Box” and kill me?”

He raised the lips on his face, and the smile looked really forced, but Alberto did not look like he could tell. He seemed to be overwhelmed by Banagher’s momentum, and pulled his chin in as he looked away. “In the worst case scenario, we’ll probably have to move the “Unicorn” later.” He said to the black subordinates following him, and Banagher merely moved his eyes, paying attention to the subordinates’ reactions.

“If possible, let the transport carrier leave the ground. The safety of the substitute leader is priority.”

“Yes.” The subordinates said as they left the scene and went off to the driver seat. Alberto watched them leave, and suddenly glared at Banagher; he grabbed the latter by the chest and pulled him over. “I won’t kill you that easily.” He whispered at Banagher’s ears, and immediately pushed him aside.

“I won’t do anything to you until we find the “Box”. As far as what we do to you after that, it’ll all depend on your performance.”

With his back turned towards Banagher, who took a few steps back, “Move the trailer to the back of the deck, and move out when you can.” Alberto called out to the driver seat. Banagher watched him walk towards the driver seat, and upon hearing the ignition of the trailer engines, he made up his mind. This would be the only chance. He waited for the trailer to move, and after several seconds, the wheels that were as tall as a human started to spin. The 16 wheeler vehicle drove off, and Banagher used that opportunity to sprint off.

He darted part Alberto and ran right at the cockpit. “What the?” “Hold it!” with the angry growls behind him, he dashed past the driver seat and ran straight at the front end of the trailer. Once he spotted the appearance of the pilot, he closed his eyes and got down on the floor. The pressure of the several tons vehicle went by his head, and the heat of the engine blew over his back, before the shrill sound of an emergency brake surrounded him.

“Was he run over!?” “WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU DOING!?” the voices of Alberto and the rest could be heard. Banagher twisted his body, rolled away from where they were, got out from the gap between the wheels, and used the momentum to roll out and stand. He leaned himself onto the ladder at the side of the vehicle, took a leap up, gritted his teeth, and only thought about rushing onto the platform.

As long as you don’t give up, the opportunity will definitely come — Banagher relied on Captain Bright’s words as support and used his handcuffed hands to grab onto the ladder for support as he moved his feet on the steps. He would be able to see the “Unicorn” once he got on, and if he could get into it, he would be able to find a way to escape. He looked up at the white machine that laid weakly, and just when he reached his hands to the platform. “He’s here!” the voice caused him to panic. The Vist subordinate poked his upper body from the driver seat and aimed its pistol at Banagher, who, upon seeing the other man in the eyes, felt that he could not move his arms grabbing the ladder.

“It’s fine if he doesn’t die! Just shoot the legs or anywhere else!”

Alberto yelled as he went around the back of the vehicle, and the subordinate narrowed his eyes as he used the finger to flick the hammer. Banagher could not even close his eyes as he heard a sound that caused his hairs to stand. He knew that he would be shot if he remained still, but he could not move. He could not bear the killing intent, which he could dodge within the mobile suit, with his body of flesh alone—

“Get down!”

At that moment, a heavy sound rang, and Banagher’s body reacted on its own as it let go of the handrail on its own. The sound of metal clashing with each other rang above his head, and he watched the sparks scatter off the ladder and rain down. As he rolled onto the floor again, he heard the sound of a machine gun being fired, and could see sparks flying near the car of the driver seat. The subordinates immediately jump off the driver seat and hid behind the blind spot of the vehicle. The mechanics nearly ducked down, and the subordinates used the vehicle as a shield and immediately shot back.

The machine gun shots were many times that of the pistols as they hit the vehicles, and a subordinate could only give up on the gunfight as they hid into the corner. The other pushed Alberto down and got onto him to protect him, and the bullets of the machine gun went above their heads. Two figures immediately charged out from the blind spot of the hangar, and Banagher could sense a throbbing on his chest that was lying on the floor. One of the men raised his sub machine gun and fired, while the other man used this chance to get into the driver seat of the trailer, and turned his head back to look at Banagher. That man in Federation uniform stared right at Banagher's eyes, and his wide open mouth was covered with bearded stubble.

"Over here! We're running!"

The sparks of the bullet impacts struck the door of the driver seat, covering Zinnerman's face as he spoke up. He got onto the floor and fired back with a submachine gun, and Besson, who was also in a grey uniform, used the covering fire to leap into the driver seat. Banagher saw the driver get pulled out and tumble onto the floor, and immediately got up. He ran out without a care about the crossfire, and at that moment, Zinnerman threw a grenade over his head, causing an explosive light and a loud bang behind him.

The yellowish smoke spread in an explosive manner. "It's a smoke grenade!" "Close the shutter!" numerous sounds could be heard from behind. Banagher was ostensibly chased by the smoke as he got into the cockpit, but his hand was suddenly grabbed by another arm, and he was pulled in as a result. The hard metal fist-like feeling reverberated through his body, *why?* but before he could ask back, "Are you an idiot? You're doing such unreasonable things here!" a familiar voice chastised him and rang in his ears.

"The plan we finally managed to come up with is all for naught. You just had to wait for your rescue quietly…!"

Zinnerman merely expressed his thoughts in his eyes for just a short moment, and immediately pushed Banagher into the vehicle and shot some suppressing fire from the opened vehicle door. Besson, seated in the driver seat, spun the steering wheel, and started the engines of the trailer as it boomed. "In that case, we can only barge in. Step on the gas!" Zinnerman shouted, and Besson immediately stepped on the pedal, causing the trailer to knock aside the crates of materials as it accelerate. Banagher was held down on the seat, and the pressure of the shutter closing slightly appeared in front of him, causing him to gasp.

The "Unicorn" on the platform barely missed the shutter, and the

sparks caused by the friction caused the vehicle to tremble. The subordinates chasing the vehicle disappeared behind the shutter, and once the trailer barely managed to pass through the shutter, it accelerated again. From here on, it was a one-way street through the landing deck of the ship. Banagher could see the several mechanics dodge by frantically from the front glass window, and could only widen his eyes in shock as he could not comprehend what was going on. “Give me your hands.” He heard this voice, and turned his head to Zinnerman. He followed the instructions, and a gunshot rang within the vehicle as the short chain linking the cuffs.

“Hurry up and get onto the “Unicorn”. The “Garencieres” is waiting in the sky.”

Zinnerman quickly explained and looked at the opened hatch of the landing deck 300m in front of them. At this moment, Banagher finally realized that everything, including the mobile suits that were creating chaos outside, were fighting as part of this operation, and he got up from his seat before he could think. He moved towards the rear hatch leading to the platform, looked back, and asked, “What are you going to do, captain?” Zinnerman reloaded his sub-machine gun, “We’ll fine a DO-DAI and escape.” And answered without looking at the other person in the eyes.

“Get on the back deck. Once you get into the “Unicorn”, cover us—”

“Captain, Audrey, Princess Mineva is on this ship.”

Banagher interrupted as he spoke up. “What did you say…!?” Zinnerman muttered, and at the same time, sparks appeared on the front of the front glass. Besson quickly spun the steering wheel, and the snaking trailer was rubbing against the left inner wall. The frictional sound was deafening, “MISS MARIDA’S HERE TOO!” and Banagher yelled with a voice no softer than that.

“Princess Mineva’s on the transport carrier outside, while Miss Marida’s piloting the black “Unicorn”. Tell the others not to attack it. She doesn’t know who I am anymore.”

“What’s going on? Why are the Princess and Marida…”

The front glass got shattered, and round fragments flew into the vehicle. “We’re almost there!” Besson groaned, and once Zinnerman saw that the deck hatch was already right in front of their eyes, “Talk later. Hurry up, Banagher!” he exclaimed and grabbed his sub machinegun again.

“Really, I’m always shocked by you.”

There's a sense of familiarity in his eyes as he glanced at Banagher, and he immediately turned forward and squeezed the trigger to fight back. "Same goes for you!" Banagher yelled through the gunshot, and darted through the back hatch as his chest was heating up. He climbed up the ladder, got onto the platform, and found the frame of the "Unicorn" lying on it.

Part 14[edit]

The Dwadge-type mobile suit used its hovers hidden within its expanded legs and the skirt-shaped waist armor, and moved like a skater on ice. The "Ra Cailum" mobile suits were rather agile too, but the "Dwadge", which could seemingly move its limbs at will, was moving quite abnormally. It's bulky and seemingly slow body glided over the roads, dodged the beam attacks of the Federation units, and let the large bazooka on its shoulder, shoot out smoke.

The fired rocket grazed past the Federation unit's head and triggered a pillar of fire next the rear deck of the "Ra Cailum". *This is obviously a diversion, they can't possibly know that I'm here. Are they aiming for the "Unicorn"?* Mineva secretly peeked over at a few other Zeon mobile suits moving to and fro, and leaned her forehead on the window of the transport carrier. The explosion spread within the carrier, and a trail of smoke flowed in. At the moment the ink-like black smoke covered her sights, she witnessed a black shadow charging in.

The black shadow suddenly appeared, and the "Dwadge" intending to avoid a direct conflict suddenly staggered. The black "Unicorn"—the "Banshee" did not let this chance slip away as it raised its beam saber and swung it down. The "Dwadge" wanted to draw the beam saber on its back, but its upper body that was sliced apart from the shoulder tilted weakly and fell to the side. The machine that was melted and sliced diagonally was etched in Mineva's eyes, and became an expanding fireball as the boom rang everywhere.

The transport carrier took the winds of the explosion as it let out a rattling sound, and the windows shuddered. The "Banshee" looked like it wanted to chase away the blood trails as it swung the beam saber down with one hand, and back from past its shoulders, causing Mineva to unwittingly turn her head away. The "Banshee" abstained from all unnecessary movements as its crisp movements reflected the endurance of the pilot within. It was too cold to call them martyrs, the Zeon soldier that disappeared in the explosion, and Marida, who was mind-controlled to kill her comrade—

"How impressive."

Martha, who unknowingly got behind her, had the color of fire reflected in her eyes as she said. “Do you know? In the past, a certain country once let the men and female members of a special forces fight each other, and the ones who won were the females.” The emphasizing voice at the end caused Mineva’s hands on the window to tense.

“Perhaps, it’s because in terms of biology, women aren’t unnecessary. However, that scene might be cruel to those whose eyes only see fragility.”

The “Banshee” kept the beam saber it used in his rack, and charged into the fire to look for the next pretty. *Marida,* Mineva called out in her heart, “Your Highness, please enjoy.” and she heard Martha say from behind.

“The self-satisfaction men have will all—be severed by her sword.”

Martha clenched her hand that was pressing against the window, seemingly wanting to crushing something in her hand. At that moment, Mineva had a feeling that it was this vengeance that was driving Martha, and the rage within Marida’s heart was driven by this poison, but even after doing this, nothing could improve for the better. She realized her helplessness once again, and felt like her close eyelids were trembling, only to suddenly hear a sound that caused her heart to race.

She opened her eyes and looked outside the window. Something from throbbing inside the ”Ra Cailum”, where a beam was being shot at from afar. She once felt this beast-like sensation—resonating with her throbbing, and causing a surge within her heart. Thud, thud, this energy that was gradually becoming larger was slowly awakening inside the white ship.

It’s coming. What is it? the subject itself was lacking however as Mineva looked at the after of the “Ra Cailum”. The landing deck protruded at the back started to shudder, forming a slope for transporting goods in and out. There was a small light deep within at the back hatch leading into the ship, starting to move.

Part 15[edit]

The trailer knocked aside the material crates as it passed through the deck hatch at the back, and was already giving off black smoke from its engines. The vehicle ferrying the weight of the “Unicorn” charged outside, landed on the slope in a half-gliding manner, and the driver seat was completely blown off by the bullets. The exploded engines sputtered our flames, causing the burning scrap metal to flow onto the

sloped surface, and the vehicle, engulfed in flames skidded onto the temporary port runway before moving another few meters forward due to inertia, only to stop at the anchor near the temporary runway.

(At the rear deck! The enemy has invaded the ship and is intending to get the “Unicorn”. Don’t let them leave the base. Secure the machine!)

Nigel was clashing beam sabers with a “Dom Tropen” as squad leader’s Solton’s growl rang through the wireless communicator. “At this time…!” Nigel grumbled as the enemy tried to rip the visor protecting the main camera from the “Jesta” head. At the same time, he deployed the shield on his left arm and stepped on the pedal. The mobile suit with its thrusters lit charged right at the enemy, and the “Dom Tropen” could not take it as it fell backwards.

The enemy unit collapsed onto the mechanics’ hangar and fell into the dust, but it immediately used the hovers on its waist to adjust itself. He was piloting an old mobile suit, but he was definitely a seasoned veteran. Nigel continued to protect the visor of the “Jesta” main camera, “Daryl, Watts!” he shouted into the wireless communicator.

“I’m a little busy here. Go secure the “Unicorn”, and don’t let any enemy unit close in on it!”

(Got it!) However, before he could hear their responses, the “Dom Tropen” got behind and started to swing its beam saber. Nigel dodged to the side as he let the “Jesta” turn around and raise its beam rifle. *I can hit it.* The moment he believed this, the beam that came flying from the side grazed the machine, and the “Dom Tropen” in his path disappeared.

The “Jesta” immediately leapt up and barely managed to dodge the attack from the enemy’s beam saber. The “Dom Tropen” fired its bazooka to hold off its army, and let it hide behind the Medea. The snipe came from afar due to a sniper shooting from outside the base, and the enemy unit, which nearly got defeated, escaped. “GET THE TRANSPORT CARRIER OUT OF THE WAY! TELL THEM TO HURRY UP AND LEAVE THE GROUND!” Nigel was enraged as he yelled out. First, they would have to eliminate the sniper, but they currently did not have any fighting forces to counter it. The “Ra Cailum” mobile suits were focused on defending the ship and the transport carrier, which meant that they were on the defensive. (They’re getting ready to leave immediately.) Upon hearing the response from the communication operator, “HURRY UP!” he yelled again. But at that moment, (This…!?) (It’s moving!) Daryl and Watts’ voices could be heard from behind, causing Nigel to look back at the “Ra Cailum” in shock.

There was a humanoid silhouette at the starboard engine that was wrecked just a moment ago, and was rumbling on a trailer that was in a fireball. A foot stepped onto the ground first, and the upper body that should be fastened down by wires slowly got up, before the large white body stood up straight from the platform.

While Daryl and Watts were standing idly in their “Jestas”, the “Unicorn” stood on the ground on its legs, lifted its head, and showed a glow in its dual-eye sensor under the facemask. Its two eyes under the horn were giving off a demonic presence, and Nigel felt goosebumps of unease. The white machine ripped apart the wires on its body, and with its back facing the flames, it stood forward. (What is that bastard playing around with…!) Watts yelled as he let his “Jesta” charge at the “Unicorn” standing there.

“Wait! Don’t approach it now! It’s—”

How are we supposed to treat it? Nigel swallowed the latter half of his words as his eyes followed Watts’ machine, and saw the “Unicorn” grab Watts’ beam rifle with its right hand. Watts unit stumbled forward together with its beam rifle and crashed into the “Unicorn” chest head on, and the “Unicorn” used its hands to grab the opponent, twist its waist, and pushed the “Jesta” back without waiting for it to gather itself.

The slender machine released unfathomable arm strength as Watts’ “Jesta” was knocked out and left the ground for a short moment. Daryl’s unit caught its ally, and was knocked back as well as both men’s cries echoed through the noise of the wireless communicator, starling Nigel. The overwhelming power and agile response—was something the “Jesta” could not compare to at all. The approaching alarm allowed him to regain his senses, and though he was dealing with the other enemy unit closing in from behind, he still could not forget the feeling of cold sweat on his back in such a short time.

“That’s the “Unicorn”…!”

Part 16[edit]

The twin-barreled beam Gatling guns and the shield were still equipped on the left arm, and to Banagher, it was a fortunate thing. He continued to fire shots to suppress the Federation machines in front of him, and let the “Unicorn” leap off, “Captain!” as he called into the wireless communicator in his helmet.

The flat modified DO-DAI passed through the black smoke from the trailer and went above the “Unicorn” head. It flew out from the rear shutter of the “Ra Cailum” and turned the mobile suit landing platform

towards the “Unicorn”. “We’re leaving! Hop on!” Zinnerman exclaimed as his voice rang in Banagher’s ears. However, Banagher immediately turned away, “No!” and shouted back at the DO-DAI that was about to pick the “Unicorn” up.

“Audrey’s still inside the transport carrier. I’m going to take her back together with Miss Marida!”

He fired off a screen of bullets and turned towards the transport carrier on the runway. The dual-bodied machine had a large container in the middle, and the wings that were about 70m long were moving forward together with this large body, clearly showing that the transport carrier was about to leave the ground. (Don’t force yourself! The enemy reinforcements will be here too!) Banagher ignored Zinnerman’s shout as he stepped on the pedal. The “Unicorn” leapt off hard from the cracked asphalt and immediately jumped more than 100m as it closed in on the craft.

“Audrey!”

The four jet engines on the transport carrier let out high heat, allowing it to glide faster. The 4 engines under the wings increased their power output, and Banagher landed the “Unicorn”, covered by the jet streams formed from the transport carrier, before lighting the machine’s thrusters again, and got to the side of the craft. There was a familiar face shown from a window near the cockpit, at the side of the bow. The emerald eyes were wide open, and Banagher could tell that Audrey, who had her face sticking at the window, was calling out for him. It was just a little distance before they could meet, and the “Unicorn” used the Gatling guns to suppress the Federation machine, glide past the surface with the maximum thrust, and reached its hand to the window of the transport carrier. However, just when its fingertips were about to touch the machine, another machine suddenly crashed in from aside, causing the “Unicorn” to fall towards the ground.

The “Unicorn” skidded on the asphalt and rolled off several meters, only to finally stop after knocking down the marker light. The beam saber went past the transport carrier and drew its beam saber as it charged right at the “Unicorn”. Banagher lifted his head, buried in the air bags as he too lit the beam from the saber’s hilt, and blocked the high heat particles that came right at his sights. The clashing blades let out heat and interfering waves, and the tremendous light showed the face of the “Delta Plus”.

“Ensign Riddhe…!?”

(Banagher! Have you really become a Neo Zeon member…!?”

The solid anger pierced through the armor of the machine and came right at Banagher. it was a stubborn will that was overly stiff, one that felt impossible to communicate it. it was so sudden that the face of the “Delta Plus” in front of him was like a devil’s face, and he could sense all warmth of the human called Riddhe disappear as he pulled the control stick in the moment of extreme stress.

“NOW’S NOT THE TIME FOR THIS!”

With that roar, the “Unicorn” pushed the “Delta Plus” back and kicked at the abdomen. The “Delta Plus”, which retreated back, parried away the attack, lit the thrusters on its back and glided behind the “Unicorn”. It swung its beam saber down, and a beam saber blocked it, creating lots of sparks. The scattered high heat particles burned both machines, and the transport carrier was gradually moving away from the flash.

Now’s not the time for this. Banagher felt that the distance between both of them was very far, and gritted his teeth anxiously. The gathered beams clashed twice, thrice, creating an empty light in a corner of Torrington Base.

Part 17[edit]

The “Galluss K” got up to stand in front of the new Federation machines to protect the ‘Geara Zulu” with its arm cut off, but the “Giant Bass” in its hands seemed to have run out of ammunition. The retractable arm was swung out, and as the Federation machine was unable to raise its guard, the “Galluss” fired the beam cannon on its shoulder to create a chance to attack. However, 3 new generation machines surrounded it, and a thrown grenade created an explosion of fire behind. Kirks sensed that the “Galluss K” was being surrounded as it was being rattle, he squeezed the trigger on the control stick even after knowing that the power was not completely changed. The “Zaku I” shot out mega particles from the sniper rifle, and the pink beam reached towards Torrington Base 30km in front.

The beam was supposed to graze past the Federation units, but dissipated due to a lack of power output, and the “Galluss K” ended up attacked by the 3 machines. The Federation machines clashed with it, and its arms were severed, and the machine, with the pilot inside, was dealt a fatal blow as it knelt down on the ground; the sights of the precision scope could see the light from the fireball caused by the explosion of the “Galluss K”. Kirks could not help but close his eyes, and heard a soft dull sound that came a beat later through the armor. *This is the second unit to bite the dust after Holum’s “Dwadge”. The only ones left are Yasu’s “Dom Tropen” and the two “Geara Zulus” of the “Garencieres”, but they’re running out of ammunition, and*

they're losing effectiveness in being distractions. I can't tell how many of the machines are still around.

Is it time to stop? Kirks muttered and looked at the battlefield of giants again. *We wore down less enemy forces than we predicted; it's a pity, but the "Unicorn" can already move on its own, and the sniping had already slowed the enemy ship down. It's necessary that we retreat before the Federation transformable units appear in the sky. This "Zaku I" sub generator is going to be at its limit. Considering that I have to remain until the end and stop all pursuing forces, I can't use up all the battery power here. Looks like it's time to close shop.*

It's good to retreat like a defeated dog at this moment now, isn't it? Kirks convinced himself, and as he was about to let a signal flare to indicate a retreat, the silence of the wireless communicator was filled with noise. (Can you hear me, commander?) Zinnerman's voice was mixed in, and Kirks instinctively reached his hand for the helmet.

(Her Highness Mineva's in that transport craft that's about to leave! Please shoot the bottom to prevent it from leaving if you can aim at it!)

Kirks did not understand the meaning behind these words immediately. Upon hearing this voice that made his heart race, "Her Highness's on it!? What's going on!?) he hollered back, (I'll tell you the details later! Leaving it to you, please!) Zinnerman shout was drowned out by the noise, and the wireless communicator was suddenly cut off. Kirks did not waste time on adjusting the wireless communicator as he turned his eyes to the scope again, and spotted the Medea-type transport carrier beside the "Ra Cailum". The old C-85 was not equipped with a VTOL function, and its large body was slowly accelerating as it glided down the runway, surrounded by the lights of beams and explosions.

He never thought that Her Highness Mineva—the sole heir to the Zabi family would be on it. He could still aim at the Medea's landing gear now. At this current speed, even if it loses its legs, it would ignite into flames. *This can work,* Kirks considered as a sniper, and put his finger at the rifle trigger again. It seemed that Kandle too heard the content of the transmission, (Leader, this is…!?) on hearing this doubtful question, "It's just like what you heard" he merely answered as he aimed the crosshair at the Medea's landing gear.

"In the end, the stage is still all set for us. Don't let anyone else approach. We're saving Her Highness for sure."

(Un…understood!) Kandle's voice came through the wireless communicator. It was because of such moments that a human life was not something a human could easily part with. *Just think that we*

stayed on Earth just for this moment, and all the tragedy and downs we had for 17 years would be affirmed. Kirks let out a warm sigh, felt that he managed to curb his own enthusiasm, and squeezed the trigger with the usual power. The sniper rifle muzzle let out a flare of mega particles, and an arrow of light reached out, absorbed by the Medea.

A small amount of light came from the rear wheel, causing the asphalt on the runway to be chipped off. *Did I make a mistake with the acceleration? Calm down.* He thought in his heart silent as he waited for the charge to end. The “Medea” got out from behind the “Ra Cailum”, and was turning horizontally on the scope. There was still 5 seconds until it finished charging, 3 second, 1 second. He gritted his teeth, and was about to squeeze the trigger with his relaxed finger, but a light that was different from a rifle shot entered his eyes, and the “Zaku I” took a tremendous jolt.

I got hit by a beam. The moment he understood this, the ground at his feet collapsed, and the rusted steel frame and rubble rained down on the “Zaku I”. The sight of the precision scope was lifted up, and the machine, as it tumbled, fell together with the collapsed ground. *This isn’t an ordinary beam. Has the “Ra Cailum” main cannons regained functionality?* He let the machine grab the side of the structure and land upon some ground that had yet to collapse, and aimed his rifle at the scorching hot wall collapsing outside. The blocks of rubble landed like icicles, and as he tried to catch sight of the Medea in the scope, he spotted a black machine racing through, whipping up a large amount of dust.

The black machine was wielding a beam rifle with both hands, and sped through the wilderness like it was sprinting. The enemy unit with the shining lone golden horn was charging right at the debris of the colony. Kirks spotted Kandle’s “Zaku Cannon” leave its standby position as it landed on the ground. “Come back, Kandle!” He shouted at the wireless communicator, but the “Zaku Cannon showed no signs of turning back as it closed in on the enemy unit—the black “Unicorn”, and fired a screen of shots at it.

The 180mm cannons on its shoulders opened fire together with the big guns on the sides of its waist. The cannon fire of the physical ammunition created a swirl of smoke, and the empty shells continued to pile beside the “Zaku Cannon” . Kirks could hear Kandle’s roar in the middle of the cannon fire, but the black “Unicorn” dodged the shot that rained down like a storm, and crossed by the “Zaku Cannon”. It crossed the “Zaku Cannon”, their beam sabers clashed, and the black machine immediately disappeared from their sights.

(Captain, I'll leave Princess Mineva…!) Kandle's shout was drowned out by the noise, and the "Zaku Cannon" was sliced in half at the waist, and surrounded by an explosion of light. Kirks gritted his teeth as he hear the voice and the explosion ring on his skullcap, and widened his eyes to look at the scope as he focused thoroughly on aiming at the Medea.

The craft was faster than before and was leaving the runway. *It can work*. Kirks caught sight of the landing gear in the middle of his crosshair, and put his finger at the trigger, where he placed all his agony and hatred into. However, before he could squeeze the trigger, his sight was blocked by a black shadow, shocking him beyond words.

The black "Unicorn" immediately leapt up the debris that stood 600m above the wilderness, and opened its body wide. A golden glow was radiated from its machine, and the expanding armor was gradually changing in figure as the two eyes gave a mysterious light, looking down at Kirks. The horn on the forehead became a V-sigh, and the symbol of Zeon's defeat was etched in Kirks' eyes as his body started to tremble with the premonition that he was about to be killed.

"You're going to get in our way again, "GUNDAM"…!?"

He yelled and squeezed the trigger. At the same time—no, a millisecond before, the fingertip of the black "Unicorn" squeezed the trigger, and exploding mega-particles expanded as it covered the "Zaku I". The cockpit was immediately burned, and the rampaging high heat particles caused the body to boil. That was the last light Kirks saw.

The Beam Magnum released a shot that had 4 times the energy of an ordinary beam rifle, and the "Zaku I" was annihilated in absolute light, piercing through the debris of the colony. A hole was blasted through the wall on the other side, and the heat that melted the metal scraps surged about with the shockwaves as the debris, tilted into the ground, trembled, and the gravel and peeled exteriors fell to the ground. The colony debris was surrounded by brown dust, and the large building appearance started to collapse. The dust reached the cloud together with the air flow, and a signal fire indicating the end of something appeared in the corner of the wilderness.

Part 18[edit]

The monoeye was gradually buried in the collapsing debris like a joke. *You're going to get in our way again, "GUNDAM"?* The last cry of the pilot echoed in Marida's ears, causing her to suddenly sense that she was losing her sight, and shook her head to gather her

concentration on the “Banshee” controls.

The machine passed through the dust that swirled out, and landed approximately 1km away from the colony debris. Torrington Base could be seen on the other side of the horizon, still surrounded by black smoke, and her eyes that laid upon there was seeing the Medea transport carrier being lifted gradually. The battle was about to reach its end. There were flashes that would appear in the black smoke from time to time, but those were the lights of the facilities exploding when they were destroyed. However, there was a tremendous flash of light, different from the explosions, likely the flash created when beam sabers .

The “Unicorn” is currently fighting. Marida recalled the sight she witnessed before she left the base, and felt that she was looking for that light. Her mission to protect the transport carrier, and after defeating the sniper unit that was hidden in the colony, she could tell that the enemy “presence” that was controlling the battlefield had already vanished…*but what’s with this tentative feeling? Does it have anything to do with the light? The “Unicorn”—is that mobile suit, the same RX-0 as the “Banshee”, the enemy? Is that an enemy with the same appearance as me—*

Banagher. This name suddenly appeared in her mind, and she felt her head hurt again. She swallowed her bitter saliva and endured the disgust that swelled up in her. (Ple Twelve, do you hear me?) a voice could be heard from the wireless communicator, causing her eyelashes to shudder.

(I’ve sent someone to pick you up. It’s a transformable mobile suit called the “Anksha”. Once you get on it, continue your mission to protect the substitute leader. The enemies on the ground have already retreated, but the ship may still be attacked. I’ll follow right afterwards.)

That was the voice of her Master—Alberto Vist. “Yes.” Marida pressed onto her throbbing head as she answered. (I got the identification code for the “Anksha”. Okay, it’s important that you inform me once your head hurts.) Marida did not care about the words that came next as she turned her sights to the clouds covered by the thick clouds. She could see a disc-shaped machine descending from the other end of the dust covered clouds towards her.

The motion sensor showed a matching signal, and the word “RAS-96” appeared on the screen. That’s called the “Anksha”, right? Name and model number, Marida and Ple Twelve. As she wondered why there was a need for two different identifications, she looked at the RAS-96 signal approaching her without being overly annoyed by it. *What is a*

name? What significance does it bear? It'll simply cause confusion to call the same thing two different names.

Marida shook her head to retrieve her consciousness that nearly faded again. *There's no significance in a name. I just need something to identify. I'm Ple Twelve, an existence meant to serve master. I should fulfill my master's wishes and beat all enemies of masters. Haven't I been living this way in the past? I fought against all people, things, objects that robbed the 'light' within me, and I don't need others…*

There's a paradox in this thinking. You've confused your thoughts in living for your master and for yourself. Upon hearing a certain calm voice explain this, Marida—Ple Twelve, gave up on thinking. She followed the instructions of the "Anksha" pilot as the signal blinked, and grabbed the control sticks again. The NT-D system vanished, the expanded armor contracted, and the "Banshee" was not in destroy mode any more as its horn was gathered in the center.

I just don't have to think. I can continue to fight as long as I don't think. The "Anksha" machine went above Ple Twelve, and she lit the thrusters of the "Banshee" to leap and land on the disc-shaped platform. The top of the "Anksha" met the "Banshee" limbs like a person riding on an eel, and once the round disc, which took the 30 ton mass, swayed for a moment, the "Anksha" immediately accelerated and charged into the clouds.

The transport carrier ferrying the substitute leader was flying into the clouds too. Ple Twelve used the response on the sensors to look for other machines, but no matter where she looked, a milky white mist was the only thing covering her sight, and she could not even tell where she was. She stared at the mist that became clouds, and blankly realized that it was just like how it looked in her mind.

Part 19[edit]

The beam sabers clashed and let out a flash of interference waves, covering the clouds that swallowed the transport carrier. The heat waves that could practically be a form of impact plummeted on the armor covering the cockpit, and Banagher exerted strength into his arms grabbing the control sticks again. The "Unicorn" continued to cross blades with the "Delta Plus", and let a foot step onto the asphalt. (Banagher, which side are you on!?) Riddhe's yell could be heard through the wireless communicator.

(What's the point of someone with the Vist blood helping Neo Zeon…!?)

The “Delta Plus” charged over with the shoulder armor, and the weight of two machines was pressed upon the “Unicorn” leg as it trampled through the asphalt, where the cracks continued to expand. The expanding heat waves swirled upon the asphalt shrapnel and blew away the base fence together with the dirt. Upon witnessing this scene, Banagher let the “Unicorn” withdraw and ducked to the side of his opponent. He drew a new beam saber from his back, and two set of beam particles were aligned in a cross. “This has nothing to do with bloodlines at all!” Banagher yelled back with all he had as he let the two beam blades cushion the slash from the “Delta Plus” overhead strike.

“The Federation and Neo Zeon have nothing to do with me! I just want to save Audrey!”

The “Delta Plus” was forced back by the beam sabers that were laid across each other, and stumbled backwards. Banagher used this opportunity to let the “Unicorn” step off the ground and escape from Torrington Base. The Zeon mobile suits that entered the base were gradually retreating, and if he did not meet up with Zinnerm an and the rest as soon as possible, he would be surrounded by the mobile suits of the “Ra Cailum”. He used the thrusters on its feet as a hover off the ground and looked for the “DO-DAI Kai” in the clouds above him. (I’m the same as you here!) however, the voice from behind caused Banagher to click his tongue. The “Delta Plus” readied the beam saber at its hip and charged forward, letting out a thruster flare as it charged forward, closing the distance between it and the “Unicorn” in an instant.

(Zeon’s already a vanquished country. Its country name will soon disappear afterwards. Even if you bring her to that sort of place, there’s no future to say of!)

“Aren’t they the same too? The Foundation’s using Audrey as a hostage, the Federation’s idling around and ignoring things, and they’re telling me that I need to spend some time to think!”

Banagher turned around to deflect the beam saber that was sweeping over, and let the machine glide diagonally behind its opponent. He did not let the opponent have a chance to turn back as he swung the beam saber in the left hand at the “Delta Plus”, which raised its shield to block this strike, and the followed up on that strike by raising the beam saber in its right hand. The “Delta Plus” took the consecutive attacks as it remained on the defensive and retreated back. (Spend some time to think…?) Riddhe’s murmuring entered Banagher’s ears.

“I have to understand the significance of the start of the Universal

Century, and also the significance of why a country like Zeon was born! If not, I won't know how to deal with the "Box". Audrey knows this, and that's why—"

That's why she did not have hope in Neo Zeon that has such rigid views, and took a risk to prevent the people of the Foundation from handing the "Box" over to the highly influential Full Frontal. Banagher could not finish his words in time as the "Delta Plus" flew backwards and kicked the rock behind it. it leapt over the "Unicorn" head and drew its second beam saber. (If you want to know the significance, let me tell you!) The yell came, and as the "Delta Plus" wielded its two beam sabers as it closed in, Banagher let the "Unicorn" wield two beam sabers to take on the incoming opponent.

(Zeon is the tumor born from twisted idealism of the Space Migration Issues. This Newtype thinking is just a fantasy they have, and a virus that divided humanity into two after humanity nearly united. If we don't eradicate them, there won't be peace…!)

"Is peace built upon that sort of sacrifice real peace!? There has to be a way for both sides to understand each other!"

(This is the symptom! You're the source of chaos for thinking that there are still other ways! Do you understand!?)

The 4 sets of beam sabers clashed with each other and let out flashes, creating interference waves that scattered all around. Both machines continued to slash at each other as they moved, causing the ground below them to rise as dry bits of dirt were flying about, and ionized air continued to surround these two machines.

(A single ideal allowed them to build their own influence and oppose an existing one. Their hopes of uniting tribes will only cause opposition against people who aren't willing to unite. No matter what era it is, wars are always started from irresponsible theology. It's the same for Zeon, and that Cardeas Vist who intended to open the "Box"…!)_

"No! If humanity is an existence that can only accept the reality in front of them, they should be wiped out a long time ago. It's human nature to oppose irrationality and advance forward as much as possible, right!? You're just being crushed by your own despair!"

The leg strength of the frame and the thruster jet power assisted each other as the "Unicorn" leapt vertically to dodge the horizontal slash and landed behind the "Delta Plus". Banagher predicted that Riddhe would panic and turn back, and let his crouching machine raise the beam saber in its right hand to strike up. The melting sound of metal entered the machine, and the right hand of the "Delta Plus" was melted together with its beam saber as it passed by the edge of his sights.

(Banagher…!)

“You’re saying the same things as the people of the Vist Foundation, Ensign Riddhe. You courageously brought Audrey back to Earth, so why…!”

(That Riddhe Marcenas is dead.)

The “Delta Plus” covered its right hand that was sliced off as it took a step backwards and looked over at Banagher. The hideous voice caused Banagher’s to feel fearful as he stopped attacking temporarily.

(I don’t have the power to save the world. Even if order is incomplete here, I’ll protect it if there’s no way to protect it. That way, I can protect Mineva too…!)

The “Delta Plus” did not let go of this chance as it let the remaining left hand raise its beam saber and charge at the “Unicorn”. Banagher, who was overwhelmed by this pressure, had his body tensed up as he reacted too late at that moment, and bit his lips upon realizing that it was too late. Sparks appeared in front of his eyes, and once the shield deployed automatically in front of him, the expanding smoke of the explosions covered the “Delta Plus”.

The “Delta Plus” was definitely rendered unsteady by the pressure of the explosion, but it swung the beam saber down without hesitation, clearing the black smoke in front of him. Banagher let the “Unicorn” dodge to the right, and then saw two missiles enter the ground. The missiles from the air triggered another flame of explosion, and the ”Delta Plus” twist its body as it retreated back. It looked down at the “Unicorn” through the rising smoke column, showed a vicious defiant glare from the eyes under its visor, and turned away to leave.

The humanoid that leapt from the barren land instantly transformed into a wave rider and entered the clouds. *If I let him go like this, he’ll really become an enemy.* Banagher was driven by the anxiety in him, “Mr Riddhe, wait…!” and called out. (Are you alright, Banagher?) however, upon hearing this call from Zinnerman, he looked back at the sky again, and spotted the homebase-shaped machine of the “DO-DAI Kai” approach him.

The machine seemed to have used up its remaining missiles, and it went by the top of the “Unicorn” before lowering its height and closing in. “Captain, Audrey’s…!” Banagher called out, (I understand, we’ll go after her immediately.) but Zinnerman seemed to be ready for this as his voice rang through the wireless communicator, causing Banagher to lose his thoughts on Riddhe. He deactivated the beamsabers, let the machine leap up, and lit the thrusters to maximum power. The “Unicorn” rose for 200m as it dragged a trail of thruster flare, and

landed on the “DO-DAI Kai” that glided by from below.

The “DO-DAI Kai” took the weight of the machine as it shook suddenly, and started to rise again. (Are you tracking their course, Flaste? Follow them!) Banagher heard Zinnerman’s growl from the wireless communicator, and started to check on the “Unicorn” damages. A little part of the armor was damaged, but the movable armor was not damaged at all. However, Banagher’s body itself was at its limit, as he was already panting heavily despite not using his body to fight, and his shoulders could not stop rising and falling as he breathed.

He removed the visor of the helmet and took in fresh air. After wiping the sweat off his face, he looked down at the ground that was moving further away from him. It seemed that the battle in the base had already ended, and the body of the “Ra Cailum” was covered in black smoke all over. There should be some SFS other than the “DO-DAI Kai” inside the ship, but there were no signs of pursuers. He could not confirm the safety of the Zeon mobile suits that retreated as there was a devastation of a battle roaming under the cloudy sky, whether it was the barracks that was reduced to a pile of rubble, or the numerous mobile suit scraps that were burnt red hot and lying around.

Wars are always started from irresponsible theology. If Cardeas never intended on opening the “Box”, this incident would never have happened. Before I realized it, I’m already helping to carry out father’s plans. Am I really bound by a curse like what Alberto said? Banagher suddenly had this thought, and felt a chill on his body as he turned away and looked down at the “Ra Cailum” that was giving off black smoke.

Individually, we are helpless, but individual wills united together can also drag the world from the dark abyss.—he put the sight of the ship moving further away with the worlds Captain Bright said, and turned his sights forward. No matter whether those words were a reality or a prayer to comfort the pains of reality, he could only believe in his. He could only believe that doing this could overturn the situation in a certain way, bring about a strength that would overcome the lack of logic, and allow himself to proceed forward. Once he felt that everyone would understand this, he put his hand on his throbbing chest. *No matter whether it’s Cardeas, Daguza, Loni, Audrey, or Marida, or even Riddhe, they all understand…*

The machine rumbled as it charged into the clouds. The mist passed through the perimeter of the all-view monitor, and the white that showed nothing else covered the “Unicorn”. Banagher spotted the altitude meter that continued to increase in value after 5000m height,

and continued to look at the thick clouds that were stacked upon each other. The white blank hurling itself at the machine gradually decreased in thickness. Once a bright blue color appeared in the gaps of the mist, his field of vision was suddenly expanded wide, and shown all over the all-view monitor.

This end, a place that was reached after passing through the clouds, was the blue sky linking to the distant space—however, he did not see the glaring sun, and that was because there was a large object floating above the “Unicorn” and the “DO-DAI Kai”. The sunlight that should be shining on the machines was covered blocked off completely.

The large body had two long wings that were expanded to the side, and from its profile, it certainly looked like a transport carrier. However, it was still too large to be classified as a large transport carrier. The object in front of his sight was no less than 300m long, and the width of the wings could be more than 500m. The wings that were at least 10m thick were dragging numerous jet clouds, and that dark grey colored base that flew in the sky was practically a giant castle floating in the sky. The round disc-shaped objects flying around it were probably transformable mobile suits, but no matter what, they looked like specks of sesame with such a large object in the background.

“This is…?”

“The “Garuda”.”

Zinnerman suppressed the trembling in his voice as he said. (That’s a mobile suit base in the sky, and also the launch center of a space shuttle. It’s called the largest aircraft in human history…no, I suppose we should call it an air fortress.)

The clouds were swallowed by the shadow of the base, and moved above the “DO-DAI Kai” head. The “Garuda”, which had shuttles below its wings, was gradually rising up. Banagher stared at that large machine that practically occupied his eyes, and from what he could see alone, there were 6 mega particle cannons out of countless others that were scattered everywhere. It was impossible to think that the anti-air machine guns, most probably hidden by the shutters, would amount to a few. There were 20 engines protruding out from the wings, and many nozzles inside. To the “Garuda”, a height of 6000m was already low altitude, and one could see from the underutilization of the engines that it could rise even higher. It was definitely launched into the stratosphere by making use of shuttles to negate the air resistance.

Audrey’s over there. Banagher encouraged his heart that was seemingly overwhelmed by it as he stared at the weird bird above him.

The “Garuda” showed no care about the “Unicorn”, waiting for a chance to approach, as it forced back the atmosphere with its large mass, breaking its large body away from the surrounding sea of clouds.

Chapter 3[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The sea of clouds expanded below their eyes to the distant horizon, laying a blanket on the land 6000m below. The continent of Australia was already far behind, and at this point, the “Garencieres” should be reaching the skies above the New Caledonia Islands, but it was impossible to see the landscape and the horizon from this place. On looking over, the carpet of clouds was laid around, showing a clear divide with the sky.

The “Garuda” overlooked the sea of clouds as it gradually rose in height. That was the largest aircraft made in the history of humanity, and even at close to 50km, there were other machines that could be

clearly identified. Draped in the background The escort crafts were sesame seeds in comparison to the ship itself, a massive object about in a carefree manner that was like a monster pelican flying, with the clouds draped over it—Flaste stared at the scene on the enlarged window, which caused him to forget the sense of scale, and just when he clicked his tongue, the expanded window had noise on it, and pink flashes covered the window.

The beams grazed past the ship and entered through the clouds, causing the “Garencieres”, which just floated out from the clouds, to be shaken. After a short pause, a thunderclap-like rumble rocked the bright, “EVADE!” Flaste yelled with a voice no softer than the alarm. Alec, on the steering seat, tried his hardest to turn the rotor, and the horizontal G-force struck the ship that was meandering around. Flaste caught sight of the “Garuda” that was continuously firing its beams with his naked eyes, felt a chill from the multiple shots, and turned his stare to the ship’s damage control monitor. They were not shot through by a beam, but the external armor was hit by the scattered particles, activating the warning lights as a result. (Flaste! Bring the ship closer to the “Garuda”!) Ivan’s holler could be heard from the wireless communicator, but the voice was partially drowned out by the sound of the mega-particle bombardments.

(At this distance, our beams are basically out of range. Turn the ship to the “Garuda” and lower us down!)

“Don’t kid around! You’re asking us to charge right at their shots and their transformable mobile suit guards!”

Alec sputtered out saliva as he lashed out and glared at Ivan’s “Geara Zulu”. The “Garencieres” had managed to fly in at an extremely low height to Torrington Base to pick up Ivan’s “Geara Zulu” successfully. At this point, this mobile suit was poking half its body out from the upper deck of the “Garencieres”, and was acting as the only cannon on this unarmed, disguised trading ship that could defend. Kwani’s “Geara Zulu” was also picked up, but it lost an arm and was having emergency repairs. There was no news on the “Zee Zulu” which met up with them after the Battle of Dakar, and they had already lost contact with Commander Kirks’ “Zaku I” for quite some time. As for the other random machines that joined the raid from the Shinbu Base, the “Garencieres” had no means of confirming whether they had escaped or not.

Ivan’s unit wielded the beam machine gun to get ready as he stared at the “Garuda”, looking like he could start an attack anytime soon; however, its thick green armor took quite a bit of damage. (Then what

else can we do!?) In the face of this arguing, Flaste bit his lips and swallowed the term ‘cornered’ into his heart.

(The Princess is definitely on the “Garuda”—)

A flash appeared again, and the noise appeared, drowning out the wireless communicator. The flash was brighter than the sunlight as it dyed the bridge, and a turbulence-like tremor struck the “Garencieres”. Flaste glanced aside, spotted Alec lowering the height of the ship to the clouds, and brought the microphone of the wireless communicator to his hand. He was terrified by the thunderous applause of the high heat particles raining down, “THIS IS THE “GARENCIERES” CALLING THE CAPTAIN!” but he still hollered out.

“The enemy’s fire is too thick, and we can’t approach it. it might be better to find another chance. Since we got the brat and the “Unicorn”, we can use them as a bargaining chip—”

(No, follow us outside the “Garuda” range. If we retreat now, we’ll be letting down the Shinbu squad people.)

Upon hearing the strong emphasis amidst the noise, whatever Flaste wanted to say vanished afterwards. Whenever Zinnerman started to speak with such a tone, it indicated that he would not be moved in the slightest. Flaste stared at the “Garuda” in the enlarged window, looked for the “DO-DAI Kai” mixed in with the patrol units, “What do you intend to do?” and growled. (Get onto the “Garuda”). Zinnerman’s words came together with the chaos in the speakers, and Flaste could not exhale any of the breath he gasped.

(I’ll bring the “DO-DAI” as close as possible and land on it by rappelling. As long as I can get inside, the situation will basically be in our control.)

“How are you going to go in? You’ll be shot through many times before you can even get close, right?”

(I’ll find a way. Once I rescue the Princess, I’ll send a signal to you, so don’t miss it. Get ready to retrieve me.)

A second passed after the wireless communicator was interrupted, and the machines surrounding the “Garuda” immediately scattered as they started firing their machine guns at the large machine. The “DO-DAI Kai’ and the “Unicorn” riding on it had most probably started to take action, as the sesame-like machines that were hard to identify were seemingly dancing around the large object like bees, confusing them. “Wha…what do we do…” Alec let out a doubtful voice, but Flaste argued back with momentum, “What else can we do!” and activated

the wireless communicator with Ivan's unit. "It's good even if we're out of range. Just fire randomly to attract the enemy's attention." He commanded and turned his sights back to the expanded window again.

The "Garuda" continued to fire in all directions, and the patrolling units charged forward like bees, seemingly wanting to protect the ship. Flaste understood upon seeing the machine infected by Zinnerman's stubbornness that it would be pointless to tell him logical, to fall back once things were alright. He made his resolve as he looked back at the "Unicorn" that would get involved in all sorts of misfortune once it got involved, and then grumbled a few words at the wireless communicator that was cut off.

"Good grief, at least think of your own age…!"

Part 2[edit]

The beam machine gun had a lag in between its shots that were shot out from the "Garencieres". However, due to the humidity in the atmosphere, the beams that were sweeping through had mostly lost their power, but their glows were still enough to cause someone to tense up.

The transformable mobile suit opened its legs from the disc-shaped platform and stopped abruptly to evade the beam shots. The other transformable mobile suits in the squadron followed suit; and upon seeing that there was a slight gap in the navigation route, "Charge in!" Zinnerman commanded Besson on the pilot seat.

The thrusters of "DO-DAI Kai" lit up, and the flat machine of the "Unicorn" immediately accelerated. Zinnerman felt a little intimidated as he saw the large shadow of the "Garuda" close in upon him gradually. From up close, the belly of the giant machine looked like a giant wall floating in the air. Also, it was set with numerous anti-air guns and could rip apart the winds that were flowing at 0.8 Mach.

There was no need for this mobile suit mothership to land other than the periodic maintenance, and it could revolve around Earth practically permanently—*Princess Mineva is inside there.* He however continued to think about this, feeling that this could calm his timid heart, and zipped up the fastener of the pilot suit he got from inside the unit. Once he put on the Federation helmet and latched on the attachments around it and the neck, he told Besson, "Follow it." The "DO-DAI Kai" crossed through the crossing fire and got right below the "Garuda". As it was about to spin suddenly, Zinnerman looked over at the transport carrier that was docked at the rear cargo deck hatch. The "Garuda"

was extremely large, but it seemed that it was unable to keep the old Medea-type model from Torrington Base, which was why the latter opened its hatch as steps and stopped there temporarily.

Has the Princess boarded the "Garuda"? Zinnerman stared at the Medea that was being held down by numerous cables, looked into the inside of the hatch that was vaguely shown, and summoned the data values of the Garuda-class onto the console monitor. There were 6 such large fleets in the Earth Defense Perimeter, and whenever a situation arose, they could immediately send mobile suits to take it on; this state of defense was the concept behind the Garuda. However, the distractions after the war had already reduced the fleets by half, and the "Garuda" in front of them, a precedent of its class, was definitely one of the surviving few ships. The ship had been modified and modified over and over again until it was called an air fortress, and the structure was no different from the old Garuda-class. Zinnerman could roughly deduce the internal workings of the ship, from the blueprints of the takeoff and landing. As long as they could enter, there was a chance that they could succeed—

"Listen up, Banagher. Once we get onto it, the "DO-DAI Kai" will be controlled by you. Just attack the "Garuda" and make them lower the altitude. We'll use this chance to get the Princess back."

He sent the data of the Garuda-class to the "Unicorn", and gave the instructions through the wireless communicator in the contact loop. It seemed that Banagher's insistence to save Mineva was just like his, (I can do it) as there was a calm force in his voice.

(But what will do you when we're escaping?)

"Once the altitude falls below 2000m, we won't have to use gas masks when parachuting. No matter how big it is, it's still a plane. When it's punctured everywhere, it'll have to lower its height to maintain the internal air pressure. As long as we follow this plan, they won't even be able to launch the space shuttle."

The space shuttle was dangling on the bottom of the "Garuda" right wing. It was a medium-sized space shuttle that could ferry 2 mobile suits, and inclusive of the thrusters, its length should be about 50m. However, it looked like a mini-missile from how it was dangling under the wing. If they allow the "Garuda" to reach the stratosphere, the space shuttle ferrying Mineva would be launched into space, and everything would be for naught—the "DO-DAI Kai" went by the back of the "Garuda" and lowered itself into the clouds. At this moment, "We're going!" Zinnerman aimed for this timing and shouted.

“Fly above the “Garuda” and get rid of the beam cannons. There are 4 we can aim at right at the top—”

(Let me pilot it!)

The interrupting voice ruptured Zinnerman’s ears as the machine suddenly turned to the side, causing him to be nearly shaken out from the assistant pilot seat. The thick beams grazed the side of the “DO-DAI Kai”, and the scattered beam particles that came in scorched the compartment. The fire did not come from the “Garuda”, but from somewhere else. Zinnerman grabbed onto the console and scanned his eyes around at the sea of clouds that was not overly visible. He could see a black machine showing itself through the gaps between the clouds; it was crouched on a round-shaped transformable mobile suit, the beam rifle in its hand was pointed at the “DO-DAI Kai”, and it disappeared amidst the clouds before it could be identified.

The “DO-DAI Kai” piloted by the “Unicorn” started to make an emergency turn, and the latter fired its beam Gatling guns, releasing trails of shots that were absorbed in the clouds. It seemed that an enemy unit had gotten behind the “Unicorn” as there was a mega-particle shot, brighter than the machine gun shots, which went by the head of the “Unicorn”. The “DO-DAI Kai” showed a brilliant light as it staggered greatly, and fell by 100m or so. Banagher immediately adjusted himself to let the machine rise, but Zinnerman tried all he could do to control the track the enemy through the thruster flares. He waited for the targeting screen of the Vulcan guns located on the sides of the machine, and immediately pressed the button the moment the black enemy unit crossed by.

“Fall!”

The anti-mobile suit 60mm Vulcan cannons let out a low buzz, and let out a tracer round for every five shots as it let out a slightly green trail of light in the middle of the clouds. Zinnerman’s eyes however did not let go of the black enemy machine that was dodging swiftly as he only cared about pressing the trigger. (No!) However, Banagher’s call caused him to widen his eyes in a startled manner, and at the same time, the “DO-DAI Kai” lifted its bow as the Vulcan cannons lost their target and let out a blank trail of fire.

“Banagher…!?”

(You’re attacking Miss Marida! She’s on it!)

Zinnerman’s heart jumped for a moment, only to stop seemingly. ”What did you say…?” he asked as he squeezed out this voice, and

started to look for the enemy unit that flashed by from the bottom. The pitch black machine raised the angle of the transformable mobile suit it was riding on, and turned upwards as a savage light lit the golden horn on its forehead. The black “Unicorn” was showing intense hatred within its eyes, and as it wielded its beam rifle with one hand, it charged over without hesitation.

Marida. Zinnerman muttered this name in his heart, and at that moment, as he turned aside to look, the sound of the scattered particles rang in his ears. The pair of azure blue eyes that had been serving him, that had been looking back at him, were wiped out by the flash, and a sense of pressure heavier than the G-force was lambasting his heart and body.

Part 3[edit]

The “Unicorn” dodged the attack from the Beam Magnum, and after that, the “Garuda” rained down a torrent of fire as it awaited the “Unicorn” that was moving through the clouds; Banagher used the shield to block the machine gun shots he could not avoid, and intended to escape from the shooting range of the giant ship above him, but the killing intent from right below caused him to turn the “DO-DAI Kai” diagonally.

The beam of the Beam Magnum grazed the “DO-DAI Kai” abdomen that was tilted almost 90 degrees, and the intense ray of light passed through the clouds and surged upwards, grazing by the wing of the “Garuda” as it created a pillar of light reaching the skies. The “Banshee”, riding on the disc-shaped transformable mobile suit—the RAS-96 Anksha” immediately dashed out of the clouds and raised its beam rifle to attack. The “DO-DAI Kai” was spinning around as it was flipped by the shockwaves, and at that moment, the “Banshee” managed to go up high and arrived at a position where it could look down at the “Unicorn” with the sun behind it.

“Miss Marida!”

The glowing eyes under the sharp golden horn overlapped with the deep blue eyes that had all emotions removed. Banagher clicked his tongue as he used the Beam Gatling guns to fire a suppressing attack, and dodged the beam magnums as it moved up, out from the clouds. “If you can’t hear me…!” he muttered as he drew the beam saber from the side rack of his right shoulder, and then threw it at the “Banshee” following it. The beam saber continued to reverb as it cut through the sky like a flying dagger, attacking the “Banshee” directly.

The black machine managed to use its shield to deflect the flying

dagger, but it was rendered unsteady as it swayed about; Banagher did not let go of this chance as he stepped on the pedal and let the “Unicorn” leap up from the “DO-DAI Kai”. It jumped backwards by using the rising air current, and charged at the “Banshee” at a velocity near supersonic. The black machine was chased off the “Anksha”, and ended up clashing in limbo with the “Unicorn” for a moment before it started to fall down

“Miss Marida! It’s me, Banagher!”

Banagher let the two mobile suits cling onto each other closely as they scuffled and called in through the communication circuit. The altitude meter continued to fall, and at this moment, the “Banshee” tilted its head slightly and turned the eyes under its visor at the “Unicorn”.

“The Captain’s on board too. You remember Captain Zinnerman from the “Garencieres”, right? He’s your original master.”

The “DO-DAI Kai” lowered itself at a breakneck speed and got down to the two mobile suits’ feet. Banagher restrained the “Banshee” from escaping and lit its verniers to turn its trajectory to the direction where the “DO-DAI Kai” was falling.

The thrusters let out an exhaust before they machine contact, and the machine negated its falling speed as it landed on the “DO-DAI Kai”. The “DO-DAI Kai” took the weight of both machines as it glided down hard, and the “Banshee” used this opportunity to grab the “Unicorn”, which released its arms due to the impact. However, the “Unicorn” restrained the “Banshee” that was intending to lunge back, and restrained it onto the platform. “Please wake up!” Banagher shouted with all he had.

“You two used to trust each other that much, and supported each other. I definitely won’t let you become the Captain’s enemy! That’s because you’re—”

(Ple Twelve. My master is Alberto Vist.)

The cold voice entered the cockpit through the contact loop. The pitch black armor let out a golden glow from between its gap, and as the eyes lit up to look back at Banagher, the “Banshee” swung its arms to push the “Unicorn” aside.

“Marida…!?”

(Master said before that it’s alright to ensure the cockpit and the pilot. I’ll wreck the machine if you resist.)

The “Banshee” grabbed the “Unicorn” by its visor and pushed it down

onto the platform. The beam saber on its right arm was activated afterwards, and a beam that was partially subdued in power shot out, forming a scalpel that was at the “Unicorn” neck—the place that was the equivalent of the human carotid pulse that drives the system.

Marida, no the “Banshee” knew that it had a similar body structure as the “Unicorn”. Banagher could not chase off the black machine riding on him with the beam saber as his vital regions, and gritted his teeth. At this moment, (Marida…) he heard another voice come in. it seemed that the “Banshee” received the same voice through the contact loop as it lowered its arm in a doubtful manner.

(You’re really Marida, right? Can you hear me?)

The voice came from the control seat of the “DO-DAI Kai”, and the questioner sounded cautious, as if he was touching a tumor, but there was an indomitable will in his tone. This voice caused the two Unicorn-type mobile suits on the platform to tremble slightly, but after a short moment of stillness, the “Banshee” immediately turned its beam saber at the “Unicorn”. (Those guys from the Foundation readjusted you, right?) Zinnerman’s voice this time did cause the black machine to freeze.

(But it’s alright. They won’t be able to do surgery on you in such a short time. You’re just confused by the drugs and the brainwashing.)

(What exactly, are you saying…?)

There was clearly a wavering voice from the emotionless black machine. (Pull yourself through, Marida?) Zinnerman continued to call out, and the head of the “Banshee” looked like it was unable to steady itself as it looked left and right, ostensibly trying to look for the owner of the voice.

(Ple Twelve is just a codename. You now have a proper name. Think of the meaning of the name Marida.)

The “Banshee” lost the killing intent in its eyes, (Meaning…name…) and a murmuring could be heard muttered. (Only you and I know the significance of this name.) Zinnerman emphasized, and Banagher tried to see the blue eyes in his memories together with the eyes in front of him. During the moment when he was restrained on the “Ra Cailum”, Banagher once spotted some sort of light in her eyes. If that was her actual will, that meant that she—the latter half of the words did not form in Banagher’s heart however as he held his breath to wait for the “Banshee” reaction for several seconds. He suddenly glimpsed at other machines from past the black shoulder, and the moment of

silence was forcefully interrupted.

The “Unicorn” did not wait for Banagher’s body to respond as it sensed danger and raised its Beam Gatling guns to fire. The approaching machine suddenly spun around, and the scatted parts of the disc-shaped machine were covered by the veil of water vapor. However, the machine was not blown to pieces, and the armor that formed the round disc opened upwards as it proceeds to cover the shoulder and forearm. The thruster units below the machine were turned 90 degrees, and once the mobile suit showed its lower body and legs, the goggles of its traditional Federation face stared right at the “Unicorn”.

“A mobile suit…!?”

The “Anksha” had both the beam cannons equipped on its arms, and was ripping through the water vapor as it closed in fast. The mega-particle bullets aimed at each other crossed through the clouds, and the “DO-DAI Kai”, which swayed about as the beams grazed it, lost its balance as it tumbled like a fallen leaf. Banagher let the “Unicorn” steady its feet onto the platform to prevent himself from falling in this battle, and could see the “Banshee” escaping in the sky. He witnessed his opponent use the wind pressure blowing upon its shields to negate the falling speed, skillfully adjusted its balance, and nimbly landed on the “Anksha” that transofmred into a round disc again.

They finally managed to get through to each other somehow. Banagher grumbled in his heart as he let the machine grab onto the grip of the “DO-DAI Kai” and got down to track the “Banshee” below. (Marida—!) Zinnerman’s agonized cry rang, and the “Banshee” gave a glare after regaining the killing intent it had. (It’s really your style to attack me while I’m confused, you despicable people…!) Marida exclaimed as her words stung Banagher’s eardrums.

“No! I was just—”

(Shut up! The “Gundam” is my enemy!)

The shout faded far away, and the block of energy from the Beam Magnum caused the clouds to scattered. The beam reached out to the sky, missing the “Unicorn” as it blew a hole in the sea of clouds. Banagher immediately felt a chill in it. The “Garuda” was right above, but she did not care when she attacked. She had no thoughts about working together with the defense forces, and what she gave was just her hatred against the “Unicorn”. She aimed at the “DO-DAI Kai” that was dodging around and fired a second shot without hesitation. Banagher raised his height to check the location of the “Garuda”, and his vision was covered by the mega-particles that flew in, “Don’t fire!

Miss Marida!" as he raised his voice.

"Audrey's on the "Garuda". Princess Mineva is on board!"

There was no response, and what came in through the wireless communicator was the chaotic noise that seemed to have infected Marida. A third beam chased the "Unicorn" as it passed through the clouds, and Banagher was forced to fire a screen of shots to hold off his opponent. The mega-particle shot that was as powerful as a battleship cannon raced through the blue eye, and the beam grazed the straightened rear wing of the "Garuda", causing the weird bird with its wings spread 500m wide to tremble.

Part 4[edit]

A sharp painful impact rocked the floor, causing the tremors to rise up to the ceiling above. Mineva grabbed onto the extendable pole of the gondola to support her body that was about to fall, and after a moment, a white light covered her sights, causing her to close her eyes inadvertently. A thunderclap-like boom followed suit, and the wind flowing into the deck paused for a while. She opened her eyes forcefully, turned around, and spotted the mobile suits riding on the DO-DAI SFS.

The mobile suit deck of this "Garuda" was far bigger than the "Ra Cailum" in terms of specifications. It was 60m wide, 200m long, and over 30m in height. The rear cargo deck hatch that functioned as an entrance was as big, but currently, the two thick doors were opened vertically, and the Medea transport carrier could be seen resting at the bottom hatch linking to the deck.

In the end, the large transport carrier that flew in from Torrington Base was being held in by the restrains and the numerous wires on the tail of the "Garuda", and the machine that had a 70m wingspan was mostly exposed in the sky. The mobile suit riding on the SFS was right beside the Medea, crossing through the sky behind for only a moment, but Mineva could already see the clear image of the "Unicorn" machine in her eyes. The white machine was chased off by the "Banshee" that appeared afterwards, before disappearing diagonally above, and an explosion expanded again, shaking the empty deck.

The Medea machine was starting to lose its shape because of the refracted light, and the external air of 6000m was flowing in from outside the hatch. The air barrier from within was allowing the deck to maintain standard pressure, but the strong winds that were bellowing freezing point still felt chilly. Mineva zipped up the front of her flight jumper, looking for the two Unicorn-type mobile suits in the middle of

the void. She was taken in just a little more than 10 minutes ago, and a battle began again, causing everyone to wait on the unsheltered deck for their own doom. The black-clothed subordinates of the Vist Foundation were standing around, looking outside the hatch with pale faces as they watched how the battle developed. The mechanics were all charging over ferociously, and the important personnel of the "Garuda" did not come out to meet them, probably because they intended to let the Foundation people get onto the shuttle directly, or that the unexpected battle caused them to panic. As Mineva wondered about this, a mega-particle beam caused a thunderous boom outside. "Can't we close the hatch?" Martha asked anxiously. A black-clothed subordinate immediately brought his face to the wireless communicator.

"How long are you going to keep the hatch opened!? Hurry up and move the transport carrier away!"

(Who's the idiot there? How can we let a transport carrier head to its death in the midst of an aerial battle! If you're a guest, go straight to the shuttle launch deck and standby!)

The target of this call through the wireless communicator was from the commander of the "Garuda", most likely stuck in the flight deck. The Medea could not increase in height, and could not launch into space. He was in fact the most anxious as he could not find a way to chase off the troublesome customers. "If the stray shots hit the shuttle, what do we do? We can't possibly remain alive in the launch deck, right?" The subordinate started to argue back, but an umpteenth boom deafened the ears again as the largest impact up till this point rocked the "Garuda". A horrifyingly weird sound rang from the empty deck supported by a large number of steel frames, and the wires supporting the Medea were at their limit. "The beam just went by us?" "Did the "Banshee" fire?" Martha glanced aside at her subordinates who in an uproar, "How's the situation?" and coldly turned her eyes to the man in white clothes.

"There're irregularities on the specimen's brainwaves. At the rate this keeps up, the hypnosis will likely weaken. I suppose it'll be better for her to retreat first…"

The man stood in front of the observation monitor, and turned his balding head at Martha as he made this reply tentatively. Alberto, who boarded the "Garuda" a little later, was standing beside the old man who seemed to be the facility head of the Newtype Research Institute, but he had been staring at the monitor of the observation installation up till this point, and did not seem to care about the surrounding buzz.

Martha turned her stare to him and coldly stated, “Alberto, you’re her master, you know.” Alberto’s pudgy shoulders shuddered slightly, and he turned his anxious face at Martha.

“Only the “Banshee” can restrain the “Unicorn”. Think of something. Does it not matter that you’ll lose to your younger brother?”

Little brother. This dissonant yet ever-realistic term was etched within Mineva’s ears, and she looked over at Alberto. He, who was at a loss of words, looked away from Martha, and his face certainly looked similar to Cardeas Vist in some ways. *Is he…*Mineva thought as she continued to look over at Alberto, who turned his back on her and looked at the monitor on the observation installation. He picked up the wireless communicator and spoke, “Ple Twelve, it’s me, master. Do you hear me?” His calling voice however sounded really weak in the midst of the raging winds.

“Just listen to everything I say. Every other message is a trick by the enemy to confuse you. Listen, I want you to capture the “Unicorn” and bring it here. That guy’s the “Gundam”, the enemy that robbed the “light” from you. As long as you can bring it over, your “light” won’t be taken away.”

The “light” that was taken away. The significance in that term, that ominous feeling stabbed into Mineva’s chest, causing her to feel goosebumps.

Is that the restraining bolt on Marida? Is that the driving force that forces her to charge into the battlefield emotionally? If that’s the case, what’s driving Marida now isn’t hatred for the enemy, but self-guilt. This thought will normally lead to destruction at the end, including herself. She’s just focusing her self-destructive thoughts on the keyword “Gundam”, and she’s not even controlled by the master — Mineva continued to look at Alberto, who was yelling into the wireless communicator, felt a sense of guilt from that back, and intended to walk forward before she suddenly stopped. Two black clothed subordinates blocked her path, and from past their shoulders, she could see the white slender face of Martha looking back at her.

It’s useless. The grin that showed these words spread to the side. She did not know about the buttons they pressed, and would probably only blame Marida’s abnormality on a system malfunction. Things were unlikely to change even if Mineva were to explain it, and she could only avert her stare to the rear hatch. It seemed that the “Unicorn” and the “Banshee” had already arrived over the head of the “Garuda”, and there were no signs of the two mobile suits outside the hatch. The transformable mobile suit called the “Anksha” or something was

moving about in helter-skelter, as its round disc body, unable to interfere in the battle, continued to dodge without any contribution.

There's only a hundred meters at most from here to the rear hatch, and there's no other way out. I might as well… Mineva muttered as she was driven by her impulse, and clenched her trembling fist. At this moment, she spotted a black silhouette appear in the sky, and it was quickly solidifying.

The machine that was like a fighter jet instantly got bigger and dashed past the "Anksha" squadron as it charged right at the "Garuda". It decelerated right at the back of the rear hatch, and an explosive vapor immediately surrounded it as its fighter jet form collapsed. The machine, the "Delta Plus", charged into the mobile suit deck; before Mineva could understand the situation, the machine that had transformed into a humanoid state ducked down the wings of the Medea transport carrier, and the loud sound of the landing spread apart together with the heat waves on the deck. The crewman with the command baton was shocked by the giant that suddenly appeared, and hurriedly dodged away from the hatch.

"What the!?" "Where did that mobile suit come from…?" The "Delta Plus" did not care about the ramblings of the subordinates as the landing impact caused it to charge forward by several meters before finally stopping. The thick grey armor was dyed in burns, and even though it lost its right hand, Mineva could tell from its unedged "Gundam"-like face that this was the machine that brought her to Earth. As the black clothed subordinates surrounding Martha were retreating, Mineva harbored a certain form of premonition as she looked up at the "Delta Plus". The cockpit at the abdomen opened, the inner hatch slid open, and just like what she expected, a familiar pilot suit appeared from inside.

"That guy actually chased us all the way here…!"

Alberto muttered seemingly to himself, but Riddhe did not seem to care about the numerous stares right at him as he stood on the lift wire beside the cockpit and landed onto the deck from the knelt "Delta Plus". He removed his helmet visor and fixated his determined stare at Mineva only, and the latter could only look back at him from behind the black figures that immediately got in their way.

It was an unbearable moment. The way both parties made it all the way here without care for each other caused them to feel a premonition of bitterness. "Ensign Riddhe, I don't believe that I gave the permit to land here, did I?" at this moment, Alberto stood beside Mineva, but Riddhe did not intend to stop as his continued to approach

Mineva, his determined look not wavering in the slightest. Alberto pointed his chin to direct the subordinates, and as the latter intended to suppress the pilot suit, Riddhe turned his hands behind his neck. It was too late by the time the black subordinates reached their hands into their chest pockets, as he quickly pointed a handgun barrel right at Alberto.

Riddhe probably prepared some tape on the nape of his neck, and he quickly turned the handgun around to hold off the surrounding subordinates before standing approximately 2m in front of Mineva. The subordinates still had their hands in their chest pockets as they surrounded Riddhe in steps; and the latter detected their motions as he fixated his stare, in unison with the gun barrel, at Alberto. Mineva sensed that Alberto beside her took a step back as she stared at Riddhe silently. The latter was aiming his handgun with both hands, and his beige eyes merely glanced at Mineva for an instant.

“I came to get you.”

He stated his intent firmly, and turned his gun around to hold off the Foundation people. The pressurized anxiousness in his eyes proved Mineva’s premonition, and she turned her face towards Riddhe, unable to make a sound.

Part 5[edit]

The black “Unicorn” used the disc-shaped transformable mobile suit as a footing and let its large body fly in the sky. It spun its shield skillfully and adjusted its position as the winds struck at it. Once it landed on top of the “Garuda”, it reached its arms out and landed on the wide wings cleanly.

One of the machine gun turrets were wrecked, and at that moment, the black machine that landed on the wing pointed its golden horn at Banagher. The “Unicorn” leapt off the “DO-DAI Kai” platform before the opponent fired its beam rifle. Zinnerman was nearly shaken off the driver seat that was tilted greatly as the mobile suit riding on it abandoned the craft, “That idiot…!” and grabbed the console as he growled. “Let’s fall back first!” Besson shouted, “No!” but Zinnerman yelled back and looked for the “Unicorn” in his extremely shaky vision. He could barely see the white machine land on the wing of the “Garuda”, and it charged in, dodging the cannon attack of the black machine.

Even when considering the measurements of a mobile suit, there was still enough space on the strange bird with a 500m wingspan. It was not inconvenient for both Unicorn-types were about to clash on it as it

was wide enough, but the problem was that the wind pressure was flying in at 800km per hour. Banagher sensed that the 30ton machine was about to be blown aside by the wind as he let the “Unicorn” reach its hand out to Marida’s machine. The black “Unicorn” took the wind pressure, skillfully glided on the wing, and once it stopped, it let out a flare from its beam rifle. The powerful impact of the Magnum shot grazed past the top of the “Garuda”, and the scattered particles fell down in the path, causing the wing armor to be ripped off and blown to the back. The “Unicorn” dodged, stepped onto a beam cannon, crushed it, and barely managed to let itself stop on the wing as it struggled to regain balance.

It was not weird for both sides to fall anytime soon—no, the frame of the “Garuda” would not be able to support them before that happened. Marida was obviously acting disorderly, and Banagher was gradually drawn in by her confusion. Zinnerman stared at the wing of the “Garuda” that was fluttering like a bird. *The Princess is inside there somewhere, and so in the guy who readjusted Marida and made himself the new master. He’s forcing her to fight, the one who’s causing her pain.*

“…Match the relative velocity of the “Garuda” and let the machine land on the gun turret.”

There’s no other way. Zinnerman pointed at the machine gun turret Marida’s unit wrecked as he gave this order. “But if the “Unicorn” isn’t here, the DO-DAI control is…!” Besson argued back with bloodshot eyes. “Stay here.” But Zinnerman forcefully commanded and strapped a parachute container onto his shoulder.

“Once you let me go, drop the machine out of firing range. After 30 minutes…no, 20 minutes, if there’s still no movement, bring the “Unicorn” back to the “Garencieres”.”

He waited for the machine to land, and left the seat. “This is reckless. You’re going in alone…!?” Besson chided, but Zinnerman turned his back on the other man as he opened the dock leading to the cargo deck. The parachute container on his back was a backpack that had equipment on the buttocks till the legs, and there was a spare parachute filled in front of his chest. He carried the heavy equipment that even the paratroopers would be amazed by, passed through the door, climbed down the ladder to the air lock, and reached the cargo deck that was right below the platform. The cargo deck filled with spare supplies looked like an underground bunker, but it could occasionally be used as an explosive depot, as there was a hatch to drop the explosives through on the floor.

Zinnerman closed the helmet visor and activated the installation to reduce the air pressure. As the machine continued to rumble, he pulled the cable from the winch beside him, and fastened the safety harness on his shoulders onto the wire firmly. Once the green light indicating zero pressure was lit up, Zinnerman pressed the release button to open the hatch. The wind that blew into the craft immediately hit the helmet, and he could see the surging clouds below.

The thick grey wings of the “Garuda” covered the white cloud carpet as it appeared in Zinnerman’s eyes. He looked over, and could see ice forming on the wings. “How reckless…” he vented his complains that would happen to him, and stepped onto the ground.

A falling feeling felt like it was going to tighten his buttocks, and the harness embedded upon his shoulders felt extremely discomforting. Zinnerman started to descend down along the rope as he was tossed by the currents flowing below the ship, his body swaying heavily as he relied on merely a rope. The closest the “DO-DAI Kai” could get close to the “Garuda”, without the interference of the wild currents, would be more than 30m. The blown hollow of the machine gun turret was so small as compared to the wide wing that filled his vision, a depressing sight at that, and he immediately felt regret.

Part 6[edit]

(Banagher, the Captain’s about to land on the “Garuda”! If you can hear me, cover him!)

Besson’s shout rang from amidst the noise, and Banagher’s attention that was captured by the battle in front of him started to move. The heel of the “Unicorn” was firmly etched into the wing of the “Garuda”, and as he let the machine stand on the engine block, he got into attack mode and swung the beam saber that was clashing with the “Banshee” forward.

The “Banshee” tried to retreat quickly as its footing was unstable as compared to the attacker. The black machine glided down the machine and stopped at the edge of the wing. Banagher witnessed this as he let the main camera line the wireless communicator signal to the other side. The “DO-DAI Kai” was trying to match its relative velocity with the “Garuda” as it flew 30m above the wing, and he could barely see a human figure dangling on the wire dropped from the “DO-DAI Kai”.

It was Zinnerman. He had a large rucksack on both front and back, and his waist had a backpack on it; that pilot suit silhouette was landing towards the destroyed gun turret, but he could not fall directly as the air currents continued to rage. His body was nearly dragged off

as he could only move down diagonally, and in fact, he looked like a human flag blown by the wind. “Are you serious…?” Banagher muttered, and as he tried to let the machine turn towards the “DO-DAI Kai”, a killing intent from beside him stopped the “Unicorn” in its tracks. The “Anksha” got onto the wing, surrounded by water vapor, transformed into its humanoid form with high shoulders, and drew its beam saber as it leapt onto the “Unicorn”.

There was no room for Banagher to retreat. He went full throttle as he stepped onto the pedal and let the “Unicorn” charge forward against the wind pressure. The thrusters in the backpack were activated, and the “Unicorn” was assisted by an explosive thrust as it raced down the “Garuda”. It clashed beam sabers with the “Anksha”, melted the latter’s right shoulder, and swung backhand as it sliced off the beam cannon on the left hand. At the next moment, a Beam Magnum light went right in front of the “Unicorn”. The high amount of scattered particles charged right at both the “Unicorn” and the “Anksha”, and the latter, which did not have a shield, was immediately blown into blews.

The limbs of the “Anksha” rolled onto the wing of the “Garuda” limply, and the machine immediately exploded on the rear wing. The flying flames and debris were gone with the wind, and the burnt explosion dust made a black smoke trail with the help of the 20 engines. Banagher used this opportunity to deploy his I-field, and barely managed to avoid the attack of the scattered particles, but the impact from the explosion caused the “DO-DAI Kai” in his sights to sway. The machine dropped down greatly, and Zinnerman, who was descending, landed hard on the wing; in an instant, his profile was mixed in with the debris that was blown away.

“Captain!”

The “Unicorn” stepped off the wing surface as it lit its thrusters and charged at the silhouette. The wire was snapped, and Zinnerman’s body rolled down many meters. His hand managed to grab onto the wing rectifier for merely a moment, as the strong winds instantly blew him to the edge of the wing. He flew right by the nose of the “Unicorn” with its outstretched hand, and Banagher immediately chased after the other man who was thrown into the empty sky as he let the “Unicorn” leap out of the wing. Banagher used this momentum of the wind to let the “Unicorn” grab the man that was blown away by the wing.

At the same time, he lit all his thrusters to veer the machine. The “Unicorn” twisted itself in the empty sky, letting out a trail of thruster flare moving forward, and landed back on the edge of the “Garuda” wing. It rolled onto the side of the vertical rear wing and knelt down;

upon this, Banagher checked that Zinnerman in his hands was safe. The body wearing the Federation pilot suit moved slightly, and the face under the helmet turned towards him as Zinnerman raised his hand gingerly to give a thumbs up to the main camera.

It seemed that the parachutes on both front and back sides worked as an air cushion, preventing a fatal injury. (Behind you, Banagher!) just when Banagher was feeling relieved, a voice came in through the contact loop, and he immediately diverted the “Unicorn” away. The beam saber that was swung over from the back went by the bottom of the armpit, and the blade ripped the surface of the “Garuda” wing as the backhand strike was launched up at the “Unicorn”.

The “Unicorn” barely managed to dodge at the last moment, and the “Banshee” did not let go of this chance as it swung its beam saber down. Banagher used his shield to block this thunderous slash as he pulled the right hand with Zinnerman on it back to its chest. The heat from the beam saber could rupture even Gundarium, and was definitely not something to be treated idly. If he were to be heat by any of the scattered particles, Zinnerman would end up no different from a target of a high-powered laser.

“Stop it, Miss Marida! The captain will burn to death if we clash like this!”

Banagher retreated back as he yelled out loud. The cold air at freezing point was scattered apart, and the scorching beam saber swung down without mercy as (STOP IT!) Marida’s yell rang in his ears.

(This incessant yelling is hurting my head…! If you want me to stop, just surrender!)

“Your headache is proof that the real Miss Marida is resisting! If that’s the brother unit of the “Unicorn”, you would be swallowed by the machine. Aren’t you the one who told me that my machine has such a terrifying system!?”

(That’s ridiculous…!)

The “Banshee” swung over, and used the momentum to swing an elbow, denting the “Unicorn” shield. The machine was knocked backwards onto the ground, and the wing of the “Garuda” took the massive 30ton frame as a cavity appeared in its wing like plywood. Banagher protected Zinnerman in his hands as he immediately regrouped, but the “Banshee” leapt in from above as it reached its hand to cover his sight. The “Banshee” grabbed the “Unicorn” by the head and plummeted it to the wing, and the reverse grip beam saber

tip was pressed against the abdomen of the “Unicorn”.

“The “Banshee” will give me power. This power will burn off all the slugs on me and return me the “light” that belongs to me.”

The high heat of the beam saber caused a at the back, and a emotionless pitch black figure was swaying. “Miss Marida, you—” Banagher’s words were interrupted as the “Banshee” stared to exert strength on the beam saber it was wielding.

(Nobody can ever think of getting in my way. I’m going to cut your stomach up too…!)

A demonic glow radiated from the eyes of the machine, and the hatred from within was directed at Banagher. *I’ll be killed.* Banagher screamed within his heart. (YOU BLACK MONSTER!) another voice entered the contact loop as Zinnerman furiously got up from the palm, appearing in the side of Banagher’s vision.

(RETURN ME MARIDA!)

He yelled as he fired the rocket launcher on his shoulder. The rocket head dragged a trail of white smoke and charged from the “Unicorn” palm to the “Banshee” face, causing a little explosion in the facemask. The “Banshee” stumbled backwards, (Now, Banagher!) Zinnerman growled as his voice followed. Zinnerman abandoned the disposable rocket launcher and pointed at the gun turret on the wing, and at this moment, Banagher understood the other man’s intention. It got up and punched the unmanned gun turret.

The giant fist shattered the glass in the canopy, and the gun was bent like malt candy. Banagher let the “Unicorn” uproot the gun and dropped Zinnerman’s body into the large hole opened in the side wing. (I’ll leave Marida to you!) the back profile exclaimed as it sled from the hand, and Banagher waited for the other man to infiltrate successfully before pulling its beam saber out and turned the back. His prediction that the enemy would attack did not come true as the “Banshee” did not attack during this moment. The black machine had its face looking down after it took the direct rocket hit, and the darkness that had wind blowing upon it was quietly huddled up, not getting up.

(…The “Gundam”, is the enemy.)

The armor on the machine expanded, and the huddled black shadow expanded. “Miss Marida…!?” The “Banshee” did not respond to Banagher’s call as it lifted its head that was looking down, and the exposed Psycoframe started to radiate a golden glow.

(You're the enemy that killed *us*. You're the enemy that robbed the "light" from within me. You, you're the "Gundam"…!)

The lone horn on the forehead broke into a V-shaped, and the shattered facemask slid up. The "Banshee" rose up, showing the glow of the Psycoframe, and the golden glow ostensibly showing the will of the pilot was flickering. There was no doubt that its form was a "Gundam"—as Banagher was at a loss of words, the "Banshee" in its destroy mode raised its beam saber. The killing intent mixed in with the golden glow spread all around, passing through Banagher's body as he grabbed the control sticks again.

Part 7[edit]

A loud boom sounded through the ceiling, making it seem that it was going to collapse, and the massive body of the "Garuda" swayed up and down. The siren showed no signs of ceasing its wail, and the brightness of Zinnerman's handheld explosive was not easily identified due to the lighting.

Since the battle was held on the wing, it might not be surprising to have a little tremor, but the shaking this time was different from before. *Is a "Unicorn" shot down?* He looked up and the ceiling as the dust fell, and felt a little suffocated. The numerous footsteps running down the passage made him lean his body to the wall. He took out a sub machine gun from his backpack and peeked through a slightly opened door to check the situation on the corridor. The furious rampage of footsteps closed in, "You sure you saw him?" someone's growl rang in his ears.

"Glamel of the 17th cannon said that he saw someone drop from the "DO-DAI Kai" onto the wing."

"A solo operation? He's not in freefall flight now, right?"

"Don't talk about that now. Can't we chase off those mobile suits? If we let them rampage on, even the "Garuda" can't hang on!"

BOOM. A certain knocking sound rang inside the machine, and the shaking sound faded with the footsteps. *They're all novices.* Zinnerman muttered as he stuck an explosive beside the wires on the wall, and once he was certain that there was no one on the corridor, he opened the door completely. He was in a Federation pilot suit, but his heavy equipment meant that he could not mix in with the crew. He waited for the group equipped with oxygen masks to pass by, and carried his heavy backpack as he charged out again.

He felt his feet shaking, not because of the interrupting tremors. The

reason why he felt an abnormal pain in his flank was most probably due to the heavy fall he had when he landed hard on the wing. His ribs may have fractured, but the situation did not allow for him to slow down. As the two “Unicorns” continued to do damage upon the wings, the “Garuda” continued to increase in height. He had already spent approximately 3 minutes checking the internal map of the monitor sheet and running around the thick wing before finally reaching the corridor leading to the engine rooms.

Each engine room had two main engines, and there were 10 of such rooms along the wings. There were not a lot of crew members as the “Garuda” had successfully converted into automated mode, and it was impossible for the crew that totaled less than 100 to remain on standby at this place. As he had expected, there was not a single guard leading to the engine rooms. He closed in on the 5th engine room door on the inside of the left wing, took a deep breath, exhaled, and pushed aside the unlocked door panel. “Oi, didn’t you hear?” Zinnerman yapped, and there was a man who seemed to be a mechanic, turning his stare around in fright.

“There’s an order to evacuate this block. Tell the other crew to hurry up and leave.”

He spoke in a tone only a war veteran would spoke in. “Ye…yes!” the skinny young mechanic instinctively accepted the order as he froze, and the parachute behind Zinnerman caused him to blink in bewilderment.

“But the engine rooms are completely automated. The inspectors should be in the Central Control room…”

“Very good.”

Eh? The mechanic’s mouth was half opened, but Zinnerman did not see his face as his fist slammed right into the other person’s abdomen; and for added precaution, he added in a karate chop on the neck. He ignored the mechanic who fainted and looked around the cabin. The wing surface was acting as a large cover to protect the fusion core jet engines, and there were numerous switchboards linked to the Central Control room right below the engines. This simplistic scene was basically no different from the air conditioning in an office building.

“Then…”

Zinnerman rummaged through the mechanic’s waist for the keys and opened a cubicle. It was easy to destroy everything with the sub machine gun, but this would end up activating the backup system. He

would first have to paralyze the turbine power system and lower the height of the “Garuda”. If there were time after this, he wanted to destroy the mega particle control system as well and create an opening for the “Garencieres” to approach. He considered that he would need to spend quite the effort in saving Mineva, and could not stay here for too long. He pulled out the lead wires of the heat circulation system and cut off 3 of the 5 wires.

Once he was certain that the alarm was lit, he switched off the control valve. The large engines above started to slow down drastically, and the alarm got relatively louder as it rang in his eyes.

Part 8[edit]

The sounds of the machines became a Figured Bass shook the air of the mobile suit deck, and suddenly, there was an irregular sound. Mineva felt her body float up seemingly and looked back at the opened hatch.

She could slightly see the clouds below her eyes from past the Medea transport craft. Before this, the scenery outside the aircraft was hidden by the hatch and could not be seen. *Are we falling?* as she felt puzzled, a crewman shouted, “5th main unit, both engines down!” and hurried footsteps could be heard from above.

“I heard that there’s no external damage. It’s not a power system malfunction?”

“There’s a problem with the 4th unit too. Call anyone that’s free to head to the engine room!”

The crewmen panicked as they notified each other and ran over the catwalk along the wall. *There was a commotion over a report that someone may have snuck in just now. Is it…* the moment she thought about it, Mineva looked up at the ceiling far away from the wall. “I can hand you Banagher and the “Unicorn”, but this determined voice caused her to turn to the front in shock.

“But I want her back. If you refuse, I’m going try and get her back with all I have.”

Riddhe aimed his automatic handgun with both hands as he took a step forward. Alberto, who had lost out in terms of willpower, started to back away, and the surrounding black suit subordinates had their hands reached within their chest pockets, but their hands were trembling. In this extremely tense situation, Martha was the only one who showed an emotionless and undeterred expression. “Do you understand your situation here, Ensign Riddhe?” Martha did not move

forward nor backwards in the face of the black suit barricade, and even showed a light sneer, but Riddhe's helmeted head shook slightly.

"We're in a battle here. Even the prince of the Marcenas' family won't be able to escape the fate of an accidental death. Who else will know that you're dead other than you yourself?"

Thud. The black subordinates let out this sound as they closed the perimeter. However, Riddhe remained unmoved by Mineva's urge to shout out as he remained calm and turned his stare and the gunpoint at Martha, "The military certainly fusses over the cause of death over anything else." He said as he gave a stiff smile.

"Everything I said will be recorded in the black box of the "Delta Plus"through the wireless communicator. Let me tell you first, it's useless to finish me off with the machine. When the machine's about to be wrecked, the system is set that the information will reach the nearest ally machine."

A subordinate whispered something to Martha, and the sneer immediately vanished from her face. Mineva deduced that he probably told her that Riddhe was not bluffing. If they were to kill Riddhe here, the "Garuda" and all the surrounding mobile suits would become witnesses. At this point, she finally realized the intention Riddhe had when he barged in here, and turned to look at his tense face again. "You have two choices." He pressured on as the flashes and boom of the mega-particles shook the atmosphere.

"Do you hand her over to me obediently? Or do you kill me and become an enemy of the Settlement Issues Council? I don't care what you choose anymore."

The muzzle was pointed decisively at Martha now, who, upon witnessing that stare full of madness, showed less than a second's worth of faltering. Her white, slender face showed a little bitterness, and she immediately showed her poker face again as she raised her hands and stopped the subordinates who would shoot anytime soon. All the subordinates removed their hands from the chest when her stare reached everyone, and Riddhe, who had been retreating slightly, turned to look at Mineva.

"Hurry. Get onto the "Delta Plus"."

Riddhe growled as his gun was pointed at Martha unflinchingly. Mineva looked back at him and stopped her legs from nearly moving on instinct as she clenched her fists and remained here. *I'm going to say something stupid—no, something vicious.* She understood this

well, and inhaled before turning her chiding stare at Riddhe again.

“What do you intend to do once you take me away? Are you going to lock me in the house again?”

She would not budge unless this was clear. *BOOM* an overhead explosion rang again, and she stared over at Riddhe, who did not seem to understand the question as he looked back, and showed a pleading look for a short moment. “We’ll talk about it after we leave!” he turned back to look at Martha again.

“Hurry up and get onto the “Delta Pus”. Those guys are using you as a hostage.”

“It’s the same in the Marcenas residence.”

“Audrey…!”

“What do you want to protect? Me? The secret of the “Laplace Box”? Or do you want to protect this secret to maintain your family honor you maintained up till this point?”

“I DON’T CARE ABOUT MY FAMILY!”

The voice that came from deep within the stomach rang in everyone’s ears, causing Mineva to falter from deep within. Riddhe did not look at the speechless Mineva as he pointed the gun at Martha. “What I care about aren’t about those. The secret of the “Box” isn’t what you think…” he muttered as his face was twisted with anguish.

“Everything spun out of control since 100 years ago…when the Prime Minister Residence “Laplace” was blown up. No matter whether it was me, my dad, or the Vist Foundation people here, everyone ended up being here because of this loss of control. But no matter how crazy the world is, there’re still 10 billion people…what can I do? Am I limited to protecting this kind of world? I can’t topple everything like those people of Zeon…!”

Riddhe turned his pleading stare back upon Mineva, *Please understand,* his eyes were sparkling as he expressed these words in his stare. However, Mineva could not find words to answer immediately, whether it was the Prime Minister residence, the explosion…she repeated the unnerving words in her heart, “Tha… that’s right.” And spotted Alberto take a step forward as he said this.

“That’s why we had to protect the secret of the “Box”. Her Highness Mineva knows that too. In that case, you should assist us and extract the information of the “Box” from the “Unicorn”—”

“SHUT UP!”

Riddhe yelled as he aimed his stare and the muzzle at Alberto, whose face tensed up as he retreated weakly.

“You don’t understand anything at all, you’re just someone who only knows how to use your authority. Don’t you dare talk to me as if you understood everything. Your Founder is the one behind everything. Syam Vist took part in the terrorist attack on “Laplace” and took the “Box”. That was where everything began…!”

In contrast to Martha, who narrowed her eyes slightly, Alberto widened his. Mineva suppressed her jolted heart as she looked back at Riddhe’s face. “From your expression, it seems that your aunt has more or less known about what’s going on.” Riddhe glanced aside at Martha as he continued, and deliberately lowered his gun that was pointed at Alberto.

“At that time, Syam was just a twit who had nothing. The explosion attack was not planned by him, and the way he got the “Box” was simply out of coincidence. But after that incident, everything fell into his path. The first Prime Minister Ricardo Marcenas was assassinated, and The Federation administration used that as an opportunity to harden their stance. A certain someone wrote a script, but ended up ruining it as Syam managed to get the “Box” as a weapon and climb up, which still wasn’t nothing up till that point. That was, until the One Year War…where everything changed drastically. At that moment, Syam, and the Federation government that had been following the railpath he set, finally realized after that moment. They finally understood the significance behind what they did, and discovered the true “power” of the “Laplace Box”. Not many can remain calm when bearing such a secret. The ones who know the contents of the “Box” are the leader of the Vist Foundation and part of the government led by the Marcenas. Everyone else doesn’t know the contents and feared it, and to protect themselves, they quietly protected the rules they set… just like a well-trained dog.”

“And you know the contents of the “Box”.”

Mineva spoke up before she could think, and her body took a step forward. As everyone looked over her, she stared at Riddhe and asked, “Please tell me what is this “Laplace Box”.” Their faces met for a while, and Riddhe diverted his gaze away from Mineva to escape.

“Everyone here has the right to know. What exactly is the secret of the “Box” that’s causing you so main pain to such an extent?”

"…So what if you know? Once you know that it really has the power to topple the Federation, do you intend to get Neo Zeon to steal it?"

"Ensign Riddhe…! You knew that I didn't have the intention and brought me over to Earth, right?"

Mineva strengthened the tone in her words, causing Riddhe, who was unwilling to look back at her, to frown. A hundred years ago, it was said that there was a "Laplace Box" that was born at the same time as the birth of the Universal Century—in fact, no matter what it was within, she could turn her back away from it. She had to face the truth, think and accept it no matter how it was, all in order to solve the situation in front of her. With the noises of the battle still going on behind her, Mineva waited for the other man to say the truth. Riddhe glanced aside, and their eyes met for a short moment before he turned his head away, "…If I can say it, I'll really do so." And murmured with a barely audible voice.

"I hope to at least tell you alone so that I can breathe easy, but I can't. As long as you're still of Neo Zeon…as long as you're still in a position to topple the current order…"

He said this as he turned to face Mineva, "Can you become a part of our family?" and his eyes showing the same gloominess when he asked that question. The one asking and the one being asked however had the different situations, and Mineva lowered her head without thinking.

At this point, she felt that this was not the moment to address such problems, but she understood at the same time that all concerns for Riddhe revolved around that premise, and argued silently in her heart as she clenched her fists. *But you never tried to take me away from that house. You tried to handle all the problems alone and merely pushed the results upon me. That night, if you had not grabbed my hand and wanted me to escape with you—*

BOOM. A dull explosion rang above, casting aside the troubles Mineva had for herself. The machine frame of the "Garuda" was tilted greatly, and she lost her balance as she ended up crashing into Riddhe's pilot suit.

The hangars installed at the sides were rattling, and the cranes that were dangling from the ceiling were swaying like a pendulum clock. One of the wires holding down the Medea transport carrier snapped, and a wind hollered through the deck in a terrifying manner. "Is it a direct hit?" "Are you sure someone didn't barge in to mess things up?" the subordinates were yelling. MIneva was supported by Riddhe, who

lowered his gun and stood his ground amidst the rocking floor, and upon seeing a strange reflected light on his face, she gasped. The red and golden flashes were clashing, and two colors were gradually mixed into that inexplicable light—the source of the light that shone in from the rear hatch caused the Medea to appear within, and the empty mobile suit deck suddenly became bright and dark.

Her chest was starting to buzz, and her heart was starting to race. She looked out of the hatch, and spotted a thin veil of light covering the blue sky, seemingly swaying in the sky like an aurora. For every pulsation, the lights that were like capillaries formed a film of aurora that flashed through, and rained down tiny light particles that scattered everywhere. Those were similar to the scattered particles from the mega-particle shots, but they were not lights from the beams. The golden and red lights were radiating and clashing, creating a pulsation in the light covering the “Garuda”. That light caused everything within the space to resonate, and gradually created a power that could distort a large obect.

It was just like a nightmare. Mineva and the rest forgot about everything that happened as they were entranced by it. “This light… don’t tell me!” Alberto muttered as he limply backtracked. He pulled up the old man in white clothes and yelled out, “HOW’S THE BRAINWAVES OF THE SPECIMEN!?”showing an abnormal sense of anxiety. Martha, who glared at him from behind, frowned and asked, “What’s going on?” and without waiting for the white old man to operate on the observation installation, Alberto himself proceeded towards it and answered as he continued to tap at the keyboard, saying, “We’re not too sure…no, there isn’t any actual proof, I would say.” He proceeded with the checks quickly, summoned out other windows, and slammed the casing of the installation, ostensibly lost about the development of the situation.

“But there is that possibility. Why didn’t I notice it…?”

Alberto scratched his head as he muttered, ignoring the flustered old man. It seemed that Martha too felt a chill as she asked again, her voice showing anxiousness, “What’s going on?” A pale-faced Alberto turned his head around and spoke,

“The Psycoframes are resonating. The “Unicorn” and the “Banshee” may be resonating…and creating a Psyco-field.”

The reflected light was still swaying, but Mineva could be certain that Martha’s expression changed, and she definitely felt that it was the first time the latter showed such an expression clearly. As she continued to repeat the unfamiliar term Psyco-field, she looked at the sky that was

flashing in the midst of this chaotic atmosphere. “That’s the “Unicorn”…is that the light from Banagher?” Riddhe muttered to himself as he too looked outside the hatch. The remaining light continued to fluctuate against each other, regardless of the air currents, flashing away—those were the light waves created by the “Unicorn” and the “Banshee” in their skirmish aboard the “Garuda”. Once she understood this, Mineva’s hairs stood in fright as she continued to stare at the light that shook the world itself. With the “Garuda” at center, the aurora-like light expanded gradually, ostensibly trying to fold the 500m wingspan weird bird under it.

Part 9[edit]

The machine that was deflected off was pressured by the wind, and the edges of its wings were forced back. The “Unicorn” heel hooks could not grab onto the frame properly, and just when it was about to be thrown off the “Garuda”, Banagher stabbed the beam saber into the wing.

The extremely hot beam saber ripped off the armor of the craft, and the “Unicorn” glided down several meters of its wing before finally stopped at the edge. The wing surface that was flipped up gave off white smoke, and the “Banshee” with its beam saber raised charged through this smoke and right at the “Unicorn”. The eyes under the V-shaped dual horns were glowing, and the face was showing an abnormal look that could terrify anyone’s body and mind upon seeing it. Both beam sabers clashed on the tip of the wing, and Banagher, who spotted an opportunity and got inwards, suddenly had a sensation that felt like it was going to rip his scalp as goosebumps rose all over him.

He had this feeling before when battling the “Kshatriya”, and there was ostensibly an invisible hand reaching for his head—however, this was different, more simplistic and unique. It was intangible, but it was intimidating, and he experienced a pressure that could choke himself. Whenever his machine interacted with the “Banshee”, that pressure would enter him.

The “Banshee” mounted its shield behind its back, and made use of the beam particles coming out from its arm racks to charge forward. Banagher let the “Unicorn” wield its two blades to block as he charged forward, making use of the air current to rush behind his opponent, only to see a golden glow rush out from the “Banshee” at that moment. The light expanded from the core of the machine, forming a translucent sphere that surrounded the “Banshee”, and twisted the wing surface at its feet.

“What in the…?”

That was not a simple glowing phenomenon. The Psycoframe of the “Banshee” was letting out a bright glow, spreading an unknown ‘force’ around. The lightning-like flash surrounded the “Unicorn”, and Banagher had a sensation that he was being pinched by a large hand as he moved the machine back and scanned his eyes around. It was not sunset, but the sky was darkening. The mist of light flashed around the “Garuda” precariously, and the sea of clouds at their feet were churning in waves. It looked like they were in the middle of a storm, but the truth was that this was impossible. Even if the “Garuda” was tilting to the side towards the clouds, probably because of Zinnerman’s demolition work, they did not fall that much. A storm would only occur in lower area regions.

One would get the feeling that the pulsation was the light itself, a light without warmth, but where power could be helped—and in the middle of that vortex, the “Banshee” was standing there, giving off a golden glow. The machine gun turret at the feet of the black machine was twisted by the pressure of the light waves, and the black machine proceeded to attack; “Miss Marida, stop it!” Banagher exclaimed, but the light sphere around the “Banshee” expanded, enveloping the “Unicorn” in it. The gaps on the white armor was giving off the red glow of the Psycoframe, and the glows of red and golden clashed with each other as there were many exploding sounds ringing.

“This light isn’t normal! Please calm down…!”

—Light.

Banagher heard a ‘voice’ that was not in the form of a sound as it passed through his mind in the form of a wind, causing him to widen his eyes.

—The light in my body. The light that’s born in me…!

The glow that radiated from the black “Gundam” appeared in the form of Marida, and that image that charged at the “Unicorn” was like an Eastern demonness mask; upon witnessing it, Banagher nearly screamed.

—This light can save me. I won’t let anyone take it away.

“No! You’re wrong, Miss Marida! This light is dangerous, it’s a light that can take a person’s life away!”

Upon letting out these words that did not exist in his vocabulary, he could not help but shut up. The black machine continued to swing its

sabers that were in tonfa form as it pressed forward while turning everything else on deaf years. The tattered shield was finally shattered as the “Unicorn” was tripped by the beam cannons, and fell onto the wing. At this moment, a sharp metallic sound agitated Banagher’s hearing.

The all-view monitor let out a red luminous light, and the NT-D sign glowed on the display board. The restraints on the headrest were lifted, and the assist arms fastening the helmet down were closing in from the sides. Banagher bent down to evade the restraints before he was held down. “No! Don’t let it lead you!” he yelled as he slammed the control sticks with his fists. His fingers were moving along the touch panel of the display board, giving the command to remove this mode. However, the display board did not show any reaction as the NT-D sign continued to give a bloody red glow.

“Calm down, “Unicorn”. If you become a “Gundam” in this situation…!”

Things will go out of hand here. Banagher was driven by the anxiety rising up his stomach as he used both hands to press down the glowing red display board. *rooh*…the “Unicorn let out a beast-like mechanical friction sound, and the machine throbbed about violent. The glow that could not be suppressed was fighting its way out under the armor, interfering with the glow of the “Banshee” Psycoframe, and expanding the light field in an explosive manner. The light wave patterns spread from the two “Unicorn”, and enveloped the “Garuda” with the cry of twisted metal, blowing away the “Anksha” around them like paper.

Part 10[edit]

There was a sound, either a human cry or a beast’s roar, causing the mobile suit deck to tremble, and their eardrums to rumble. The maddening light feast showed no signs of stopping as it got more savage. Mineva did not care about the tremors as she continued to look at the sky that continued to glow at the rear hatch. As everyone remained silent and still, “This may have happened.” Alberto spoke up with a stiff tone.

“There are many things we don’t know about the Psycoframes in the first place, like for example, why they glow, and why two different machines can resonate with each other even though the reception range of the psyco waves is limited…no, the term, the name is just a wave that can be observed in electricity, and we have no understanding about its true characteristics. Some people explained the Psycoframe as a metal that can enhance human consciousness, but there had never been an actual case of it, just an analysis of

rational human theory. Besides, the “Unicorn” and the “Banshee” are the first machines to have full Psycoframe in history. The battle between these two is completely beyond the manufacturer’s expectations, and we had never had a simulation for it. If we mass-produce such Psycoframes that have this kind of result, what results will there be on the battlefield…I think there is a very likely possibility that a Psyco-field will be produced.”

“A Psycoframe resonance, and an overload of Psycowaves which results in physical energy…you mean that this is a reenactment of the “Axis Shock” again?”

Martha spoke up. Upon seeing her pale face, it was clear that there was no need to pursue on regarding the significance of those words. “In that case, the “Garuda” is basically a paper plane in this phenomenon. Call the “Banshee” to back down, immediately.” Martha commanded next, “Ye-yes” and Mineva heard Alberto’s reply as she looked at the light that continued to dance about wildly without fading. The flashing light itself was throbbing, and there was pressure formed within and outside the “Garuda”; it was appropriate to call it a ‘field’. That was a light that could cause goosebumps on the skin, a light that could agitate the senses; and that was the demonic light that took the rage and sadness of Marida and amplified it, a light that could take a human life away—

“Let’s go.”

Mineva’s shoulder was grabbed unexpectedly, and Riddhe’s face appeared in the direction she was being pulled towards. He forgot to control his strength, and even if it may be caused by anxiety, this caused her to feel a little repulsed.

“There’s no reason for you to be here. Come with me.”

“But Banagher and Marida are still…”

“Marida? Are you referring to that puppet?”

Riddhe simply spoke up, and the moment Mineva’s body inadvertently tensed up, the sound of something breaking rang as the Medea transport carrier, fastened at the rear hatch, tilted drastically.

The wires snapped, and the machine that should be fastened down tilted backwards. The 70m wingspan fell from the hatch, and the Medea, that was gliding in the wind for a moment or so, flipped over and abruptly disappeared from everyone’s sights. After a beat, a light that was bright enough to overpower the Psycofield, and a tremendous boom came in a moment later as it surged its way into the mobile suit

deck. The fire and the Medea's clipped wing flew by the outside of the hatch, and the scattered debris and explosion shock the belly of the "Garuda", causing a numbing trembling on Mineva's feet.

"We'll get onto the space shuttle instead. Tell the captain to raise the height!"

Martha shouted as she held down her blonde hair that was unraveling in the strong winds. "It's dangerous here, let's go!" Mineva saw the growling Riddhe's face as he grabbed her arm, and instinctively shook his hand away.

"Audrey…?"

"Ensign Riddhe, I understand your good intentions, but I can't leave with you now."

Mineva understood very well that Riddhe did not have any malice, but he would choose to abandon Marida like a puppet without care, and that was something the old him would do. This man who used to be so understanding ignored all that he could see in the past because he tried to kill his old self, but even with that factored in, the pull he had was not enough for Mineva to entrust her life to. She looked back at Riddhe, giving a veil of rejection in the face of the fists that were trembling and the knees that were practically limp.

"Audrey…Mineva…" Riddhe muttered these names as he lost his voice and looked back at her. If she went with him at this point, she would simply fall into the abyss together—no, that was not the reason. Perhaps it was the feminine aspect within her that gave her the instant conclusion, that this man was not someone she was willing to go down with. His pleading look, and all that was shown in his eyes were causing her to reject them naturally. Even if she did not accept this instinctive response, her face would clearly end up ugly. "What a troublesome knight." As Mineva lowered her head, she heard a spiteful voice from beside him, and her clenched fists were trembling. Martha gave Mineva a mocking stare as she remained surrounded by the subordinates wielding their handguns.

"But I admire your guts, Ensign Riddhe. It's because of people like you that there won't be openings when the world revolves. I suppose you'll definitely become a long-lasting politician, just like your father."

It was unknown if these words she said were the biggest humiliation to him. Martha commanded the subordinates as she stared at Riddhe. "Come, Your Highness. This way please. Let's not embarrass the Ensign any further." However, Mineva ignored her as she looked back

at Riddhe, who stopped looking at Martha as he too turned his weakened stare back at Mineva.

“Is this the order you want to protect/”

Mineva looked deep into Riddhe’s eyes as she took a step towards him. At this moment, his shoulders shuddered.

“If the “Laplace Box” is opened, there’ll be a massive war. I dare believe that a twisted order is still better than a war. But if that kind of order is going to be suffocating…”

Mineva turned her back on Martha and the subordinates as she grabbed Riddhe’s hand together with the handgun. “Mineva…!” Riddhe muttered as he looked at his hand that remained unmoved, “I am the daughter of the Zabi family.” and Mineva continued.

“I can’t abandon my name. As a descendant of a family that had once committed a serious crime, I have a responsibility to carry out my duty.”

“Don’t do that. You’ll be killed!”

The black suit subordinates seemed to realize what was going on as they turned to look at Mineva’s back. *I know that what I’m going to do is foolish, but there’re too many people who died. As long as I remain a hostage, the sacrifices will continue to increase. If I use myself as an exchange, I can at least remove a source that will continue a wronged situation*—she took Martha’s stare from behind, took a deep breath, and swung a hard elbow at Riddhe’s abdomen with all her strength. “Mineva…!” Riddhe groaned, and she grabbed the handgun from him before turning around to face Martha, only to hear consecutive gunshots fill her five senses.

I got hit. She thought. At that moment, she could not tell whether she was standing as she closed her eyes, but someone knocked her down from behind. A sharp explosion rang, “AN INTRUDER!” and a certain voice rang above Mineva’s head as the gunshots rang. A drum-like machine gun burst followed suit, and she barely opened her eyes to see a slightly yellow smoke.

She could see a scene of Martha running away with the subordinates surrounding her and the flash of someone firing a gun, lighting the place, on the other side of the smoke whirled away by the wind. “Princess!” and heard a voice amidst the gunshots. Upon hearing this familiar voice, “Zinnerman…!?” she got up while wielding her gun, snuck out from Riddhe who was lying above her, and looked for the owner of the voice in the midst of this rapidly thinning smoke. She

immediately found a hulking pilot suit figure sweeping through with machine gun shots and running at her, and she immediately turned her body to him as she ran.

“Mineva, wait!” Riddhe’s loud exclamation however was drowned out by gunfire, and the bullets passing through the sky flew by her head. The wind continued to blow in from the hatch, so the smokescreen could not last for long. She could see a white cloaked old man hiding behind the observation installation with a pale face amidst the smoke, and spotted Alberto coughing beside it. She readied the trigger of the handgun as she held it with both hands, holding off any subordinate trying to approach her, and glanced behind before running off. She met Riddhe in the eyes as the latter was unable to move due to the sparks of the bullets flying across the deck, “Excuse me!” a voice called out from behind.

“Hurry, to the rear hatch!”

Zinnerman yelled out with his gruff voice as he threw a new smoke grenade. The explosion shook the mobile suit deck, and the burly arms grabbed Mineva by the collar as he ran away before the smoke covered the black silhouettes again. She hurriedly moved her legs, looked up at the face with the Federation helmet on it, and affirmed that the bearded face under the visor was definitely the loyal servant who was practically her surrogate father. *How many of them are on board—?*

“What do you plan to do next?”

“The “Garencieres” here. Please drop down with the parachute.”

“And you?”

“There’s still something I have to do.”

Once he finished, Zinnerman immediately ducked into the blind spot of a gondola shaft and fired a spray of machine gun shots at the pursuers. He intended to remove the spare parachute in front of him, but was unable to do so. “Go! I’ll catch up later!” he pushed Mineva in the back, and she ran towards the rear hatch. She leapt over the snapped wires and sprinted forward at the rectangular hole of the hatch. The Medea blocking the entrance had disappeared, and the rear hatch leading to the sky became exceptionally wide.

Only 50m left. If I don’t get there fast, the crew might lock the hatch up. She had no time to look at Zinnerman behind her as she merely focused on running down the wide deck. However, a dazzling flash suddenly appeared, blocking her sight. She, who seemed to be

pushed back by the light, covered her eyes with her hands, and at the same instant, there was a loud boom and an impact that entered the hatch, surrounding her body immediately.

She thought that the hatch in front of her had been crumpled like paper right at the instant before she was blown away, but that was an instant impression. The rampaging heat waves grilled her earlobes, and the smell of burnt hair entered her nose. After an abnormally long 2, 3 seconds, Mineva felt pain rising up in her as her back slammed into something. She moved her hands with vigor, and once she grabbed onto something hard that felt suspiciously like a steel frame, she tried her best to cuddle her body that could be blown away anytime. She did not know whether she was standing or lying on the floor, and as she held her breath and waited for the heat wave to pass by, she was suddenly covered with cold wind.

Her hearing was recovering, and the loud wind noises became gradually louder in her ears. she opened her eyelids, and what she first saw was that her hand was grabbing onto a steel bar that was poking out horizontally. She then lifted her head and saw the mobile suit deck that was larger than what her vision could hold. The bellowing smoke scattered quickly, and an unbearable ozone stench lingered in her nose as she spotted the burnt walls and ceiling. It was the stench of the mega-particles scorching the air. The floor near the hatch that was hit directly by the beam had a crater chipped off it.

The severed surface was still red hot, and white smoke could be seen fluttering away because of the strong wing. *What about Zinnerman and Riddhe?* Mineva felt worried as she supported herself off the twisted frame again as she stood up, but the loose footing shocked her, and she immediately grabbed onto it and looked at her feet. There was no floor below her feet , only a layer of the frame that was intertwined, forming a little cliff, and the sky was below this cliff. The sea of clouds flowing towards her formed a large vortex, flowing below her feet like a torrent.

Mineva tried to stand up while using the barely collapsed floor as a footing. The beam that was shot down from above blew the hatch away and pierced through the floor. She understood that she was at the edge of the structure as she leaned her body on the frame she could only rely on. If she moved 2m forward, she could stand on the deck, but the few footing points were too weak, and they were being peeled off with the wind. She felt that they would not be able to bear her weight, and did not feel that she had the acrobatics to walk along the steel frame. The frame linking to the deck was twisted halfway through, forming a dangerous arc.

She really wished that she had taken Zinnerman's parachute, and grabbed onto the frame with her numb hands as she poked her head out to observe the situation, "Princess!" and nearly released her hands because of this voice. Zinnerman reached his head out from the head, saw Mineva in this situation, and gasped for a moment before he yelled, "Wait there! I'll go right over there!" But once he said that, the sparks from the gunshots grazed his feet, and he disappeared without her reply. The sound of the machine gun was mixed in with the winds, and faded away. "Zinnerman…!" the sudden heat wave and roar caused her to feel the impact from behind, and her body that was leaning on the metal frame tensed up. She turned her head behind, and there was a black giant falling from the wing surface as its vernier flares were etched in her eyes.

The "Gundam" mode "Banshee" readjusted itself as it let out flashes from its back and leg thrusters, and got up onto the "Garuda" again. Mineva had tilted her head away because of the heat waves the giant gave off, but she still witnessed the luminous golden glow from the pitch black machine that was scattering around. It was the light from the Psycoframe –the Psycofield formed by the "Unicorn" and the "Banshee". The twisted light covered the surroundings, and Mineva held her breath as she felt the two machine clash with each other on the wing as she looked at the clashing lights.

Banagher was in this light, and she could feel that he was fighting hard

to avoid being sucked into Marida's anger. The thing resonating was not a machine, but the two Psycoframes being amplified. Once she realized that this power was born from their consciousness, Mineva understood that her consciousness could be felt as well as she had a sudden thought, and shuddered at it.

She took a deep breath, exhaled it, and closed her eyes to gather her thought in the rumbling light. *This is something only a mad person would do, but there's a chance of it succeeding. If a human consciousness can call out and reach out to each other like this, that person with the warm hands who once caught me successfully in "Industrial 7" will definitely—*

"Mineva!"

The voice that came from close by pulled Mineva's consciousness back to reality. She widened her eyes and spotted Riddhe at the edge of the deck. "Don't move, I'll go over!" the white pilot suit went out from the charred black deck, and immediately slid down the tilted surface of the hole without hesitation. He went down the twisted metal frame and reached his hand forward as his eyes met Mineva's, who lowered her head as she hesitated on whether she too should reach her hand out.

This isn't the hand I should be holding. She could not think of an appropriate line as she let her stare fall onto the flowing clouds. "Mineva…!?" Riddhe muttered as he reached his hand out, but just when his fingers were about to touch her shoulders, she took a step back from the narrow footing.

"What are you doing? Hurry up and give me your hand?"

"I should have said it before, Riddhe. You're heading down a different path from me."

Riddhe gasped as he pulled his hand back slightly, showing despair on his face. "You're still saying that…!?" he reached out again, but Mineva looked forward and bid farewell,

"I'll use my eyes to see the true identity of the "Laplace Box"."

An icy cold gust blew by them, and the shattered deck was peeled off. Riddhe looked back at Mineva, and his body that was grabbing onto the frame lost its balance.

"Perhaps I'll commit the same crime as my father or grandfather, but even so, I—"

"You still intend to fight against the world?"

The stiff voice interrupted, and she looked over at him in surprise.

“Nobody, whether it’s those who rely on their privileges or those who have dissatisfaction, believes that this world will rely change. If we can protect the current life, the world 100 years later will mean nothing to them. Do you want to fight against those people alone? What’s the point of sacrificing so mu—”

“I’m not alone.”

Mineva felt the familiar light from behind as she said firmly. *I know that this choice’s illogical, but the hand I want is in that light. Maybe nothing can be done, maybe we’ll just die with regret, but this is a test to me—a test to see whether this puny me has the fate to interfere with the world.*

Riddhe’s face was twisting in a near-teary state as he reached his hand out with all he had. “Mineva, please…!” Upon hearing this voice he eked out, she lifted her face decisively.

“I assure you that I’ll find the most appropriate method. Goodbye, Riddhe Marcenas. I won’t forget you!”

As she yelled out, she closed her eyes and released herself from the frame. She felt a floating sensation covering her body, “MINEVA!” and Riddhe’s yell faded away in an instant as the sound of the wind blowing by her ears was the only thing she could hear. Her body passed through the hole in the “Garuda” deck floor and fell towards the clouds, not supported by anything as it got dragged with the torrents. The freezing currents swarmed her as she swallowed her realization, and she felt her mind and body freeze as she spun 5000m in the sky.

She felt neither a sense of falling or floating. If she had to describe it, she felt that her body was drifting as it mixed in with the falling shrapnel, dancing wildly in the wind. *I can’t die now, it’s not time yet. You should be able to sense me, just like how I sensed you now. That’s because you right now are on a machine that enhances a human’s consciousness*— the words she carelessly muttered deep within became tangible as she felt a pulsation within. It became a thin glow from the forehead, and once it resonated with the surrounding glowing field, her mouth that was blocked by the air currents let out a voice for real.

“Come and catch me, Banagher!”

Part 11[edit]

A bright light in the form of a voice entered Banagher’s head, causing

his body on the cockpit to shake. He suddenly blinked as if he was blown away by the wind below.

“Audrey—!?”

Banagher turned his head around and used the beam saber to block the beam tonfa of the “Banshee”. He used the momentum to let the machine retreat to the edge of the “Garuda” wing, and looked over at the clouds that were passing by below. *No doubts about it, she’s calling me.* A certain familiar lifeform was calling out to Banagher, and the direct thoughts passed through the thick clouds as they entered his body.

There was no room for him to make a choice. He held his breath and stepped on the pedal. The “Unicorn” leapt up from the “Garuda” wing and entered the empty sky before ripping through the field of light and disappearing within the clouds.

(Hold it!) Marida’s call was mixed in with the static, and though the massive frame of the “Garuda” had already left his vision, the beam of the Beam Magnum followed him as it pursued the “Unicorn” and grazed it. Banagher managed to evade the scattered particles by spinning around, and gathered his thoughts on the thick layers of clouds. 5000m, 4800m, 4200m, the altitude meter continued to decrease in value, and the “Unicorn” expanded its limbs out wide as it charged down like a rocket. The clouds disappeared soon after as an endless sea surface appeared in front of his eyes, and his main camera caught sight of a certain bean-sized object. Her flight jacket was flapping, and her slender limbs were trembling as her silhouette fell straight down the roaring atmosphere.

She’s there. Banagher widened his eyes as he stared only at Audrey as he gripped hard onto the control sticks.

(You can do it, right? “Unicorn”?)

A rumbling sound, probably a roar, rose up from within the machine, and the NT-D logo blinked. The white armor slid apart amidst the friction from the air, and the sudden low pressure caused the water in the atmosphere to freeze as the “Unicorn” was immediately surrounded by water vapor in an explosive manner. The lone horn on its forehead opened in a V-shape, cutting through the surrounding white mist, and the exposed Psycoframe let out a glow as the machine in its “Gundam” form used up all its verniers. The “Unicorn Gundam” spread its limbs wide to increase the air resistance and negated its falling speed as it approached Audrey.

The person flying through the wind gradually got larger, and the cursor overlapped with her figure on the monitor. Audrey's hand fidgeted slightly as she turned her body around, and the emerald eyes were slightly opened, staring at Banagher. She had not passed out. It was just like the moment when she was floating in the sky of "Industrial 7" as her body, hoping for survival, appeared, in front of him. He wanted to let the "Unicorn Gundam" reach out to get her, but determined that he would not be in time, and opened the cockpit. With the incoming wind pressure blowing upon him, he brought his body away from the linear seat and reached out from the hatch, just like the last time.

Audrey's profile flashed by in front of him and entered a blind spot in his vision that was formed by the cockpit, preventing him from seeing things clearly. The Intention Automatic System detected his emotions as the machine started to regulate its falling speed. He saw Audrey again, and reached his body out from the hatch; at that moment, he clearly saw the emerald eyes looking back at him. He was prompted by his throbbing heart, and reached out his arm more just when his body was about to be blown away by the air currents. The hands of the "Unicorn Gundam" moved too as they clasp with each other to form a

net, caught her gently, and brought her towards the cockpit. Banagher reached his body forward as he held himself from the hatch, and once their fingers matched, he grabbed her hand tightly.

He immediately pulled her towards him, and they fell into the cockpit. After using all his strength to grab that delicate body, he sat back on the linear seat, closed the hatch, and grabbed the control sticks again. *Haa,* Audrey heaved a huge sigh, and Banagher could feel the warmth from her forehead reaching his chest, and spreading through his pilot suit. *She's alive, alive in my arms.* He trembled, both in body and in mind as he had the urge to embrace her tightly, but he understood that the situation did not allow for it. The machine had already fallen to below 3000m in height, and there was nowhere to land as he could only see the blue seas below him.

He opened the throttles and let the main thrusters flare out. They managed to slow down and regain approximately 100m in height, but they were still in trouble. Even if they could negate the falling speed, he had no idea how to handle it. If they fell into the sea, the drowned machine could be crushed by the water pressure. "Banagher…" Audrey let out a troubled hoarse voice, and Banagher did not look at her face as he answered, "I'll think of something!" and answered as he felt the weight of the life on his knees. *I finally managed to meet Audrey, and now I'm going to crash into the sea?* He bit his lips regretfully, and just when his trembling hands grabbed onto the control sticks, a siren suddenly rang, and an enlarged window opened on its own as it showed an approaching object.

A familiar triangular ship was descending down the clouds. "The "Garencieres"…!" Audrey exclaimed, but Banagher did not pay attention as he stepped on the pedal first. The main thrusters of the "Unicorn Gundam" let out long smoke trails, and it fell towards the falling "Garencieres". The 120m long ship body closed in on it, and once it got right below the "Unicorn Gundam" that was trying to elevate itself, Banagher immediately spotted a "Geara Zulu" poking out from the deck, waving at it.

The two machines crossed by each other, seemingly reaching out to each other for aid. The "Unicorn Gundam" got pulled onto the "Garencieres", and its limbs touched the ground. The "Geara Zulu" put its hand around the "Gundam", (I caught him! Bring the ship up!) and Ivan's exclaiming voice rang through the contact loop. The thruster nozzles on the aft let out flares as the "Garencieres" accelerated, lifted its bow, and started to rise up the sky again. Ivan's "Geara Zulu" quickly ducked inside the hatch again to reduce the air resistance, and a shockwave created waves upon the sea surface.

(Are you alright, Banagher?)

The machine followed Ivan's machine as its lower body slipped into the hatch, and Flaste's voice immediately rang through the cockpit. Banagher met Audrey face to face, and grabbed her shoulder in a daze, "I'm fine! Audrey's with me too!" he then said that with a thoroughly delighted voice. (Audrey?) However, Flaste asked back with a puzzled tone.

"It's me, Flaste. Sorry to trouble you.)

Audrey's sudden interjection caused a stunned moment of silence in the wireless communicator. (Eh, this voice, is that the Princess!?) Soon after, a higher pitched voice rang through the communicator, and Banagher and Audrey gave smiles. The dazzling emerald eyes in front of him suddenly had a sense of life, and he frantically removed his hand that was resting upon her shoulder.

(What's the situation now? Where's the Captain?)

"He's still in the "Garuda". Please direct the ship there."

"Don't say something unreasonable! If the limbering "Garencieres" is to approach it, it'll just become a target for the enemy unit. Leave the recovery of the Captain to Besson.)

"Miss Marida's on that enemy unit! Please turn the ship around and bring me there. Also, please take care of Audrey."

Banagher immediately finished off his words without waiting for a response, and held onto the control sticks again. He let the "Unicorn Gundam" kneel down on the deck, checked the air pressure, opened the cockpit hatch, and leaned the machine towards Ivan's "Geara Zulu". He looked over at Audrey, seated on his knees, and gave a slight nod. Her emerald eyes showed a little uncertainly, "Banagher…" as she put her hand on his shoulder.

"I heard your voice clearly just now."

Banagher held her hand and said this as he looked straight at her. Her fingertips were trembling as she had not regained her warmth yet, and she looked up at Banagher's eyes.

"I'm so happy. I finally understood why I'm here. You called me here."

"I'm still…"

"If this feeling is real, the Captain and my voices will definitely reach Miss Marida's heart. I'll definitely bring her back, so wait here, okay?"

The “Geara Zulu” on the other side of the cockpit hatch gave a glow in its monoeye as it reached its hand over. “Over here, Princess!” Audrey spotted Ivan, who showed his face from the cockpit, and looked back at Banagher again. She tried her best to remove all uneasiness from her face, showed her dignity as a leader, “I’ll leave it to you then, Banagher Links.” and said as she got up. Banagher endured the sudden loss of weight on his knees as he gave her a look of promise.

“Be careful of that light. It’s a demonic light that absorbed Marida’s sadness and continues to expand. You’ll be sucked in if you fight it directly.”

Audrey brought her feet onto the hatch as she silently gave a warm look right at Banagher. Her tone, her precise insight made Banagher certain that it was the Audrey he knew, “Roger that.” He answered as he closed the helmet visor. She gave him an affirming look, leapt towards the “Geara Zulu” arm and followed it down to the mobile suit deck. The “Unicorn Gundam” cockpit hatch and cover were then sealed as it got up and poked its head out from the upper deck hatch where the wind currents swirled.

The white mist passed by his vision, and the ship approached the “Garuda” that was showing itself through the gaps. Banagher spotted the ship that had one-thirds of its engines malfunctioning with black smoke rising from it, and dismounted the Beam Gatling guns that had a few shots left from the “Unicorn” arm as it wielded the 4-shot guns in both hands. There were a lot of things he wanted to say, he wanted to ask. He would do any task laid before him to avoid any sacrifices, and to buy time for everyone to calm down and face the issues. He looked up at the thin veil of light that was swaying with a dangerous pressure, and made up a suggestion of compromise in his heart.

Part 12[edit]

The pressure that faded once rose near her feet again. The thoughts of others continued to swarm her mind without relent, and she could not slay them all no matter how she slashed. The “Gundam” continued to stand like a ghost, giving off a pressure—

“Why, why can’t I beat the “Gundam”…?”

(Ple Twelve, we’re going to change the plans to launch the shuttle. You’re to come back and protect it. The substitute Foundation Leader is on the ship—)

Alberto’s voice rang instead Ple Twelve’s head that was full of pain. “Shut up!” she groanded as she opened the helmet and tried to break

away from the headrest restrains and bent her body towards the display board, nearly leaning on it. The discomfort of the headache clotted the blood within her head, and her vision was distorted as a result. She spat out some bitter saliva, and the tablet Bentner developed as a sedative entered in. She had consumed countless tablets, but her headaches showed no signs of easing up. The signals of her pain went from her brain to her vertebrae, and her fingertips that were grabbing onto the control sticks were throbbing as well.

Eliminate the enemy, the "Gundam". That's what I have to do. My headache will stop then, and the discomfort in my body will disappear. This understanding flashed through Ple Twelve's mind in the form of signals as she wiped away the spit at her mouth. She gathered her consciousness on the pressure that was closing in, and let the "Banshee", which was in sync with her, ready the beam rifle. The pitch black machine gave off a golden luminous light, and as the field of light expanded, she felt another pressure, different from the "Gundam", rising below her feet.

That mobile suit flew out from the rear deck of the "Garuda", transformed into its Waverider form as it went around the "Banshee" for a shot moment, and then transformed into its mobile suit form as it descended near the edge of the "Garuda" wing. The thick grey streamlined body was looking towards the sea of clouds below it, completely ignoring the "Banshee" as it tilted its head around. The allied machine marker and the name "Delta Plus" were indicated on the enlarged window, but these details did not matter to Ple Twleve. That was because the visor on the main camera was sunk inwards, and the head looked like it had eyes on it; to her, it simply looked like a "Gundam" without the horns

"You're a "Gundam" too…!?"

Ple Twelve let out an outburst as she aimed the beam rifle at it. The "Delta Plus" showed no signs of dodging as it only cared about looking towards the clouds. The human thoughts inside the machine suddenly entered her head, causing her fingers on the trigger to numb.

—Mineva, where did you go? Answer me. Don't leave me alone, don't leave me…

That thought interfered with Ple Twelve's consciousness like noise, and she could sense the owner of this thought crying. The pleading 'voice' became a discomforting particle bouncing around in her mind, and she felt nauseous as she exerted strength into the trigger.

"If you're just going to weep here, DON'T GET IN MY WAY!!"

The beam rifle let out a flash, and the empty Magnum cartridge was ejected from the gun. The beam grazed the “Garuda” wing, brushed right by the engine block, and the right shoulder of the “Delta Plus” was devoured by the light. As it was deflected by the impact and falling, the engine block of the “Garuda” let out flames as it got hit by the scattered particles that exploded, and the large machine lost another support as it tilted heavily.

The “Banshee” lost its balance as it knelt down, and Alberto’s voice could be heard within the cockpit, (Calm down, Ple Twelve! If the “Garuda” goes down—) she could no longer distinguish noise from human voices as they tormented her head, and she was forced to remove her helmet and toss it away. She felt annoyed by her long hair that scattered, and gathered her concentration upon the actual “Gundam” itself. *I have to protect Master.* This forced view flicked in her mind, and just when she asked herself who her Master voice, (Marida, do you hear me? It’s me, Zinnerman.) Another voice rang through the communicator.

“Zinnerman…Master?”

(That’s right. I hated this saying, but you just won’t change. It really suits your stubborn nature, but I’m the one at fault here. I named you, but I always treated you as a subordinate.)

The words came in fast, but the voice that seemed to be reminiscing started to shake her eardrums. At that moment, Ple Twelve’s synchronized vision with the “Banshee” was cut off, and so spotted another thing right in front of her. Where was this place? She knew this place. Her master’s large hand handed her a photo, and she took it during a time when her hair was not as long as how it was at this point. She could see Zinnerman in his thirties on it and a woman who seemed to be his wife. He pointed at a girl who was about 5 years old in the photo, and muttered that he had never seen this photo for 10 years.

If she’s still alive, she’ll probably be of the same age as you—that’s right, her name is— The interrupted words exploded within her mind, creating a bigger trigger of the headaches as it pressed towards her head from the instead. She desperately pressed down her head that felt like it was going to explode, (Let’s go home together, Marida.) but a voice called out from reality, causing her to open her eyes.

“The “Garencieres” is here, and the Princess is safe on the ship. Everything will be normal when you come back. Come back with me to space.)

Ple Twelve removed her fingers that was entrenched within her scalp, and looked at the hands that had several strands of hair on it. Those were the hands controlling the “Banshee”, those were the hands that killed a lot of humans, and she even killed her Master. She declared war on the world that robbed her of her ‘light’, eliminating everything that tried to hold her down. Right, she killed him. There was no way a killed person could appear here. There was no way the situation could return back to normal, just like how she could not give birth to a ‘light’ in her body.

The “Anksha” advancing forth scattered and fired at the enemy unit. The “Gareniceres” passed through the shots and closed in on the “Garuda”, while the “Gundam Unicorn” knelt down on the ship shot out beams to hold them back. “…It’s impossible to revert everything to normal now.”Ple Twelve let out this voice from her dry throat, and grabbed onto the control sticks again. (Marida…!?) she ignored this call from the communicator and let the “Banshee” face the “Gundam” that was approaching.

“There’s no need to revert things back to normal. EVERYTHING CAN

JUST DISAPPEAR NOW!”

The explosion of emotions resonated with the Psycoframe, forming light wave patterns on the machine that scattered around. The armor of the “Garuda” took the impact and was ripped up, and as an “Anksha” was knocked aside by the impact, the “Unicorn Gundam” leapt up from the “Garencieres” as it lit its beam tonfas. The Psycoframe of the white machine was giving off light that resonated with the “Banshee” light waves, *Miss Marida!* A ‘voice’ from this response entered her body and mind, and the violating-like thoughts infuriated her. The “Banshee” charged over with its beam tonfas to clash with the “Unicorn Gundam”. There was a light, different from particle interference, formed as it caused the “Garuda” wing to wobble like jelly.

The sound of a certain large object being twisted rang above the head, and the armor was gradually ripped off as the noise spread through the empty mobile suit deck. The term screech would not be enough to describe this sound as the “Garuda” let out a dying cry as it fell greatly, and Zinnerman’s floating body crashed into the wall.

The entire hatch was blown off, and the large crack opened above the deck was letting out air. The roaring winds passed by his ears as he heard the frantic voices of the crew, “Retreat to the deck!” “We might have to evacuate everyone here. Get everyone to the escape pods!” he barely managed to distinguish the yells as he clicked his tongue secretly in the blind pod of the hangar. The Vist Foundation people had already moved to the shuttle, and while they would not be able to head to space from this altitude, they would probably prioritize their escape here. The communicator link to the “Garencieres” was up a little while ago, and the “Unicorn” landed on before it passed by above the “Garuda”; however, there was no news of it at this point. He also could not contact Besson on the “DO-DAI Kai” and no matter how he called out, he could only hear noise.

The noise entered the communicator through the “Garuda” antenna. Whenever the light flashed above, the bad reception would worsen; and whenever the light disappeared, the noise faded. The “Unicorns” were clashing with each other, creating light and noise. Zinnerman could still maintain contact with the black “Unicorn” by the contact loop, and he let the thinning oxygen into his lungs as he called out into the communicator, “Marida!” However, an intense tremor and a loud roar shook the ground; the communicator dropped out of his hands as he fell, and as he remained sprawled on the floor, he hurriedly reached his hand out. At this moment, a man appeared and reached his leg out to step on the communicator, and the gun pointed at his head pressed

him down.

“Don’t confuse her any further.”

A man with fat cheeks muttered as he pointed the gun. Zinnerman could tell, despite the ash smeared on the other man’s face, that it was the face of the man wearing the Vist Foundation attire. This man was standing watch with a group of white clothed researchers before Zinnerman launched his raid.

“She’s no long a member of Neo Zeon. Give up and leave this place. The “Garuda” won’t last for long.”

This person is Marida’s current master. Is his name Alberto? the blood surged up Zinnerman’s head as he growled, “What nonsense are you spouting.” and glared angrily at Alberto’s face from past the trembling muzzle.

“You’re the one who should scram. I’ll take Marida back. She’s not the tool you people think she is.”

The gun held in both hands trembled even more. *This man here isn’t used to such a situation.* Zinnerman understood that it was not wise to agitate the other man, but he still finished his words. “I KNOW THAT!” however, Alberto responded with an agitated tone that completely defied his expectations.

“SHE’S NOT A TOOL! SHE’S…”

Alberto was at a loss of words, and after twisting his lips, he showed a bitter expression on his face. *What’s going on?* Zinnerman frowned for a moment, “Master Alberto! Hurry! The shuttle’s leaving!” and a voice rang as a white clothed old man appeared from the side, covered completely in ash. “Oi, someone’s calling you.” Zinnerman pointed his chin, and Alberto glared back at him as he exerted more strength into his hands holding the handgun. The bloodshot eyes met each other, *not good…* and Zinnerman thought as he gritted his teeth. At this moment, the light shining in from the rear hatch suddenly darkened, and Alberto’s body could be seen shrouded in the shadows.

He turned his eyes around in shock, and saw the black “Unicorn” with the thruster lights on its back, followed by the white frame of the “Unicorn Gundam” closing in on it. Both “Gundams” proceeded back and forth within the deck, and the hangar was knocked down as the hot winds of the released verniers spread around. Zinnerman saw the black “Unicorn” fall as its hand flatten the old man in white clothes. Blood and flesh was splattered everywhere immediately, but the impact and noises of the clashes between these several ton machines

immediately drowned everything else out as a hot wind swirled about, covering everything as it blew above his head.

The workcar got knocked into the air, crashing right into the compressed gas cylinders, creating an explosion of flames. The energy of the explosion created a quake, causing Zinnerman, who was sprawled on the floor to feel a rumbling, and he lifted his head only when the heat wave passed by. Alberto had disappeared, and the two “Gundams” were in front of him, stepping on the floor and trying to get up. The black “Gundam” was lit by the flames, giving off a similar look as the “Unicorn Gundam” it was facing in this mirage, and the Psycoframe giving off the golden glow was flickering like it was breathing.

The sleeve of the machine gave off the heat of the beam saber, causing the handrail of the catwalk to melt and bend like malt candy. “MARIDA!” Zinnerman covered his face as his skin was being burnt, but the black “Unicorn Gundam” did not care about what was below it as it continued to backtrack and knock over the work vehicles.

Part 13[edit]

The work vehicle got crushed by the 30 ton plus machines and let out a cry; however, this was merely a piano note in the middle of a big orchestra. Alberto stubbornly lifted his head that was knocked onto the ground, and brought himself up, only to gasp at the sight of the 2 machines in front of him.

The fires were burning through the mobile suit deck, and the “Banshee” and the “Unicorn Gundams” had glowing eyes as they eyed each other, forming two shadows that were facing each other. The Psycoframe for both machines had already decreased in brightness, and the field chose not to activate nearby, probably because it was a self-conscious reaction not to do so in the cramped space? Alberto laid limp as he sat back on the floor, staring at the luminous light that was hard to distinguish; at the next moment, both machines let out the heat they had when they charged forward, drenching him completely in heat. Just when he inadvertently lifted his hands to cover his face, the heavy metal colliding impact rang through the deck, and the interference waves of the beam tonfas created an artificial shockwave.

The overly dazzling beams crossed each other, and the flying high-heat particles was scattered all around as powder of light. The particles landed between Alberto’s legs and let out a melting sound, scaring him as he took several steps back. As he reached behind, his hand touched another person’s arm, and he gasped as he turned around. The white clothed sleeved arm was snapped, and Alberto

could recognize that it belonged to Bentner, but he was not certain. That was because there was no body beyond the snapped shoulder, just like the white clothes it hard, and he could only see paint-like blood lying on the floor.

The scattered particles of the beams dropped into the blood, and the deep red color mixed in with the solid objects let out a white steam. The smell of cooked meat entered his nose, and this agitation alone caused him to remain seated even as his senses were numb. (Master Alberto! Please answer! The shuttle's about to launch!) the communicator at his waist exclaimed, but he ignored it as he merely looked at the soles of the "Banshee" moving up and down. (What are you doing, Alberto!?) It was only up till the point where Martha yelled out hysterically that he finally thought of bringing the wireless communicator to his ears.

(We're leaving. Forget about that specimen. We just need to find a replacement, whether it's the machine or the pilot.)

Alberto's numb senses were jolted awake by this voice, and he looked down at the communicator in his hands. *She doesn't understand. Aunt doesn't understand, and she has no intention of understanding—no, maybe to her, everyone else is just something that can be replaced anyhow.* (There's no time. Hurry—) Alberto ignored Martha's call as he switched the frequency of the communicator. "Ple Twelve, it's me, your Master. Do you hear me?" he said as he looked up at the "Banshee" clashing with the "Unicorn Gundam".

"There's no need to reclaim the machine back. Wreck the "Unicorn". Hurry up and beat that guy and escape me with. You and I are the only ones left here."

The "Banshee" deflected the enemy's beam tonfa and immediately reached to grab the "Unicorn Gundam" by its head and slammed it hard against the wall. The impact of the collision bent the catwalk there, and the shaft of the gondola fell rapidly. The 6 men capacity metal basket crashed down in front of his eyes, giving off sparks, but he did not feel fear from this as he slowly got up. The "Banshee" was already controlled by the NT-D, and the system was gradually losing control due to the resonance of the Psycoframe. The pilot was in the rampaging machine, merely acting as a part used to drive the system, and there was no voice that could reach Marida anymore. Alberto knew that he was futile of him to say this, "Just like that, good girl." But he looked intoxicated at the "Banshee" as it swung its mechanical beam tonfas. The "Unicorn Gundam" dodged the beam in the nick of time, and charged right at the "Banshee", which swung its beam tonfa

down as the edge of the stick grazed the white machine; the scattered particles flickered like fireworks.

“If it’s you, you’ll definitely be able to beat the “Unicorn”. This guy’s the cause of everything. As long as you destroy it, the path leading to the “Box” will remain sealed, and aunt will only give up. Even my father…”

Can only give up, right? Alberto could not help but ask himself, and shut his mouth as he answered himself. Wrong, that man will never stop. Even with such a change in the situation, Cardeas Vist’s modus operandi was that he will think about what move to make next. He forcefully used his firm self as a basis, determining that those who were weak were simply lazily. That willful foolish man ignored his own son and left the “Unicorn” to the son born out of wedlock. Why did things end up like this? Who let the gears spin out of control first? The mother who could not follow the extremely strong-willed father, and died as a result of her frail heart? The mistress who had a relationship with the father behind Alberto’s back after the mother died? The arrogant father himself who devoted himself to opening the “Box” after the mistress left him? The aunt who proclaimed that they had to eliminate the father? Or he himself who helped execute that plan?

He recalled the expression his father had when he died, that look of despair and pity appeared in his mind, causing the emotions to suddenly appear and dampen his vision. *No, I’m not the one at fault here. It’s his fault. That Banagher Links took dad away, and even took the machine he built, and he didn’t even know that he stole something at all. That guy caused all order in the world to be thrown out of order.*

Just looking at that guy alone makes me anxious. For some reason, I just feel anxious for some reason, and I feel inferior, like I’m being taunted for being useless. It’s good if he was never born. If I could be as strong as him, I won’t have a complete breakdown in relation with dad, I€ won’t end up with an abnormal relationship with aunt, and I can’t possibly harm dad— Tears swelled in his eyes and slid down his cheeks; he wiped them away and brought the communicator to his mouth. He set the frequency to the public channel and growled. “To all the mobile suits surrounding the “Garuda”, shoot the “Unicorn” on my command!” he then caught sight of the white machine in his wet vision.

“It’s fighting against an allied machine on the “Garuda” deck. Shoot it down immediately when it stops.”

He held the communicator that had only noise as he turned his face to the incoming heat wave. The water droplets stained upon his face was evaporated, and he lifted his lips in a sneer. To his eyes, the Psycoframe glow was increasing, and the white devil was still trying to

send the “Banshee” into the brink of insanity. *I won’t let you take anything else away from me. Marida will beat you. This one life that’s strong-willed, gentle and transience mother-like will defeat you and settle all our debts. I don’t need aunt, and I don’t need dad. I’ll just wait here, until the moment the “Banshee” slice you apart and chase away the darkness that has no way out—*

A little rattling sound rose up his feet, and it seemed that the thrusters of the shuttle had already lit up. His sanity deduced this, and it was blown apart by the rampaging hot winds as he merely continued to look at the lion and the unicorn clashing with each other. The imagery of the tapestry hanging in the Vist residence appeared together with the scene in front of him, dulling the dim flames further.

Part 14[edit]

If the altitude was at 10,000m, where the air was thin, the momentum could propel the large space shuttle into space. The rocket engine that was as long as the shuttle itself let out a flare, and as it dragged a long trail in the sky, the shuttle draped under the wing of the shuttle was dropped off. At first, the shuttle merely moved forward, and as it left the “Garuda” wing, it accelerated, and after 10 seconds, was faster than supersonic.

The ripples of the shockwaves spread from the front tip of the “Garuda”, and the shuttle gradually moved away from the round shaped shock cone. Despite the massive resistance in the atmosphere, the shuttle used the speed of the “Garuda” itself as a shield, and after continuous acceleration, the flare smoke immediately left a trail that lasted for several kilometers.

The “Unicorn Gundam” released the “Banshee” in its arms and got ready to steady itself, and Banagher was distracted by that sound and tremor for a minute, but the gathered particles swung up from below and sliced through the beam Gatling gun, and he clicked his tongue annoyingly as a result. He threw the melted and severed Gatling gun in his right hand, and used the beam tonfa on his left arm to block the continuous attacks. The feet responded on their own automatically as their reverse hooks stabbed into the gaps of the deck tiles, and though the machine was able to steady its footing as a result, it was really hard to fight against the opponent with such an unstable posture. The deck slightly tilted over, the burning work vehicle and the collapsing frames were thrown towards the wall of the right wing, and the “Unicorn Gundam” slammed into the hangar right behind it.

“The floor’s tilting?”

There were no signs of the tilting being corrected as a large amount of shrapnel fell from the deck that was tilted 30 degrees. This was the result of the shuttle's launch, and the trim tanks under the right wing were activated to create a balance with the left wing that still had a shuttle on it, but there was a malfunction in their opening mechanism, preventing it from sliding over the fuselage. The "Garuda" lost balance due to the launch of the shuttle and was tilted to the right. The "Unicorn Gundam" managed to avoid tripping as it got on its feet, and the "Banshee" pointed the beam tonfa at the "Unicorn Gundam". Banagher let the machine turn to dodge, and the impact that struck the cockpit shocked him.

The restrains on the cockpit hooked onto the white machine's shoulders, and it was too late for Banagher when he realized it as the beam saber charged right at the cockpit. *Is this the end?* he did not have the time to ask himself, let alone close his eyes as he looked right at the beam saber, his teeth clattering due to the regret rising in him, as the beam saber charging right at his eyes seemed to stop at that moment.

(Marie!)

At the same time, there was a gruff male voice from the communicator. Banagher tilted his frozen neck, "Marie…?" he uttered out the name as he spotted Zinnerman on the monitor, standing on the catwalk right beside the "Unicorn Gundam" head.

The figure dressed in the pilot suit reached its body out from the bent handrail as it called out for the pilot of the "Banshee", and then moved from the "Unicorn Gundam" shoulder to the cockpit hatch at the abdomen. "This is too reckless, Captain!" Banagher again looked back at the beam blade that was vibrating extremely close in, and raised the machine's right hand to the chest.

Zinnerman slid off the cockpit hatch, hurriedly rolled over onto the hand of the "Unicorn Gundam", grabbed the large finger that he could embrace with both arms, and got up. (Marie. Your name should be Marie.) he called out as he looked up at the "Banshee", ignoring everything else from his sights, and Banagher could only look at his back in shock.

(I've always wanted to call you Marie, but I couldn't, because I was too scared. I was scared of losing someone important again, and gave up on all happiness I could get. Let's go home, Marie. Come home with daddy.)

Zinnerman opened his arms wide as he called out from the hand of the

“Unicorn Gundam”. The beam tonfa that was extremely near him looked like it was going to burn him, and the “Banshee”, ready with the weapon gave a silent stare. Banagher realized that this was a moment where he could not and should not interfere with as he looked at both of them as they faced off. The “Banshee” silhouette appeared in the mirage formed by the beam blade, and the “Gundam” face seemed to be crying.

Part 15[edit]

(…I understand that it might be too late to say all this now, and it doesn’t matter if you have no intention of returning. I’ll stay here. I don’t want to lose anything else now, and there’s nothing left for me to lose.)

There was a man, leaning on the “Gundam” hand with his arms opened wide. The black eyes looking back became a foreign object drilled into Ple Twelve’s head, causing her to feel the seeds of pain within her sprouting against as she grabbed her throbbing temples with both hands.

“What is…this man saying…?”

Daddy, home, these words have nothing to do with me. This man in front of me is not my father, and I can’t possibly have one. This man is Master. He hates to be called that, but he’s been playing the role of master. Just like him, I didn’t dare to take that step forward. I don’t think that a stained person like me can replace the ‘light’ he lost. That’s why I kept following him as a pawn to reduce the collateral damage for each other—so, what about it? What am I thinking about here?

(Don’t let him get you, Ple Twelve! I’m your master, hurry up and beat down the “Unicorn Gundam”!)

The sobbing voice entered Ple Twelve’s consciousness, and she turned behind. She could see Alberto lying at a corner of the tilted deck, staying right beside the twisted gondola. The round face of the man holding the communicator appeared on the enlarged window behind the burnt wires, and he was giving her a look of dependence. His eyes gave her a bigger pressure than the haunting look of the man in front of her–

(I can save you, and you can save me. Think about it. The “Gundam” is the enemy. Once you beat it, everything will be over. Let’s leave this place.)

Those eyes had the same deficiencies as they were exuberating passion. “The “Gundam” is the enemy…” she muttered as she turned back to the “Unicorn Gundam” in front of her. Her master, Zinnerman

was reaching his arms out to her. She was waiting for him in the “Gundam” hand—no, that could not possibly be her master. She had already killed her master. She hated the world that robbed her of her ‘light’, abandoned all self that had nothing left, and snapped her master’s neck.

The machine drew its right hand that was releasing the beam back and aimed it at those opened hands of the man who looked ready to be crucified. *You’re just someone who’s trying to confuse me with your words!* Ple Twelve intended to impale the man with the “Gundam” as she pointed the cursor at him, who showed no signs of backing off. That shadow covered the “Unicorn Gundam” that was trapped in the hangar, and a light shadow profile was spread across the wall, and the V-shaped horn silhouette was swaying like hot air.

““Gundam”…?”

She withdrew the machine and looked behind. The “Gundam” was not there. The “Banshee” was doing the same movements as the black shadow, and she turned back to look at the wall. Those hands, legs, body, that mystical silhouette was squirming just like the “Banshee” itself.

“I’m controlling, a “Gundam”…”

She let go of the control sticks and touched her face with her hands. The flames lit the “Banshee” and the shadow of the “Gundam” was reflected on the wall. *This means that I’m on a “Gundam” too? I’m inside the enemy, and the enemy’s inside me? The enemy that killed my sisters, robbed me of my ‘light’, and continues to remain in it no matter how I tried to chase it or catch it?*

I’m my own, enemy—

A snake was wriggling inside her mind, causing the seeds of pain to erupt. Her body and mind were breaking apart, and the ideals that were once connected to her heart were severed as the flesh and blood that were connected to the machine were gradually absorbed as a weak body. *I’m my own enemy. The one I hated, wanted to kill is the me who can’t protect my own ‘light’.* A certain person’s voice rang deep within Ple Twelve’s head, and she immediately screeched. Her body was sprung up as her eyes widened; what sparkled in her eyes was the glow of the Psycoframe and the numerous warning windows, and the NT-D logo that was gradually fading became an afterimage etched in her eyes. The beam blade of the tonfa disappeared instantly, the glow of the Psycoframe darkened, and the “Banshee” collapsed on the scene like a puppet with its strings snapped.

The expanded frame started to contract, and the moveable armor completely covered the glow of the Psycoframe. The horns on its head clamped toward, and the giant's eyes were covered as it lost its "Gundam" shape, lying forward limply. The "Banshee" leaned on the "Unicorn Gundam" itself, and the machine that ceased to move opened the cockpit hatch on its chest. Ple Twelve was ejected from the linear seat, and the air maintaining the pressure within the machine flowed out instantly.

She had neither strength nor ability to protect herself as her body passed through the hatch and onto the "Unicorn Gundam" armor. Thoroughly battered, she last saw the front armor of the waist, and met the dual-eye sensor on the "Banshee" head. The black "Unicorn" seemed to be satisfied that a useless part was ejected as its eyes darkened slightly, and it machine itself became a block of metal. The pain of the splitting headache and the battered injuries faded from her consciousness, and she closed her heavy eyelids.

"Marida!"

The gruff voice immediately rang, causing her consciousness to waver as it nearly passed out. Zinnerman, her master was calling her. Ple Twelve—Marida opened her eyes and rolled her eyeballs that were unfocused. Zinnerman in the pilot suit got through the gap of the "Unicorn Gundam" fingers and slid towards her, reaching his arm to her as his black eyes, showing only concern for her, revealed a glint underneath the helmet. This was the hand that had true warmth, the hand that saved her from the dark underground room…*daddy's hand.* Marida muttered subconsciously as her limp body started to struggle. She lifted her heavy arms, and her trembling fingers were reaching for Zinnerman, whom she had not seen for a long time.

(Stop it! Ple Twelve! Back to the cockpit!)

The cockpit hatch of the "Banshee" was still not sealed, and there was a sobbing-like screech from within. *Whose voice is it?* Marida's mind could not think well as she pulled her upper body up with much difficulty, only to feel a killing intent swarming the scene. She quickly turned back, and upon seeing the rear hatch, she spotted the round-shaped object flying into the deck, surrounded by thruster flares.

The "Anksha" resisted the external pressure of the "Garuda" as it successfully passed through the rear hatch, and immediately transformed into its mobile suit mode as it stood firm on the deck. The beam launchers on its arms were aimed at the "Unicorn Gundam" , and Marida, upon realizing that Zinnerman was still stunned and rooted to where he was, "MOVE!" turned towards the "Banshee". The

light in the eyes that were extinguished once flashed by, picked up her thought waves, and immediately raised its beam rifle. The Beam Magnum cartridge was ejected, and the “Anksha” cannons fired their mega-particles, causing two things to happen.

The Magnum shot created a light that surrounded the “Anksha”, and as the exploded machine was knocked out of the cockpit, the crossing beam shot the “Banshee” in the flank. The light of the explosion expanded, dying everything in the line of sight white, and Marida could not think as she took this heat wave, and her body was knocked into mid-air. The scattered particles expanded like smoke, and the body that lost its sense of gravity was pierced through by an umpteenth number of shockwaves. She managed to pick up the scent of cooked meat, and that was the last thing she sensed as the pure white light became the color of flames; a heavy darkness she had never experienced before leapt upon her, causing her to lose consciousness.

Part 16[edit]

Marida’s tender body was dancing in the sky, mixed in amongst the burnt shrapnel. Her long hair was scattered like the wind, and right before she landed on the deck, Zinnerman charged forward to catch her.

They fell from the front armor and tumbled onto the thigh. Banagher tried his best not to let them fall as he pushed the “Banshee” aside and raised the Beam Gatling Gun in its left hand to support it. He gathered his concentration on the killing intents gathered behind him as he looked at the rear hatch. The second “Anksha” had already landed on the overheated hatch, and the beam launchers on its forearms were aimed right at him.

“These guys…!”

The 4-barreled gun of the Beam Gatling started to spin, and the mega-particles shots landed directly on the “Anksha” body. The “Anksha” right arm was blown away with the launcher, followed by the left knee. It staggered backwards as its body was giving off black smoke from its bullet holes, and was thrown out of the hatch as it got sucked into the raging clouds outside. Banagher exhaled and opened the hatch in front of the cockpit.

Two figures were lying on the knee armor. “Captain!” Banagher leaned out from the cockpit as he called out, and the latter, who sheltered Marida with his own body, showed a response. Before he felt relieved, Banagher hurriedly got back to the linear seat, and he used the control sticks to move the right hand to where the duo was. Zinnerman

hobbled up as he carried Marida, and right before he left the limp and unmoving body lie on the palm, a new explosion rang through the deck.

Banagher waited for Zinnerman to get up, and brought his right hand up to send both of them into the cockpit. He left the cockpit for a moment to bring the wounded in, but the way Marida looked in Zinnerman's clutches caused him to gasp.

Her face was completely covered in blood and ash, and there was no sign of her usual beauty. Her pilot suit was tattered by the numerous particles, and the wound on her left flank was open, but it did not seem to be bleeding. The skin probably got burnt by the extreme heat of the particles and clogged the wound. Banagher did not have the guts to imagine the inside of the broken suit, and as he inadvertently retreated. "Don't dily-daly here!" Zinnerman growled, his voice causing Banagher's shoulders to shudder. Zinnerman's bloodshot eyes were glaring at him furiously.

"We finally managed to save her. I won't forgive you if your blunder ends up killing her."

His charred black face had the trail of water on it. Banagher felt embarrassed by his moment of hesitation as he reached his hand out to Marida without saying a word. Both of them brought her into the cockpit, and Banagher let Zinnerman, who was using himself to support her as a pillow, sit beside the linear seat. Banagher then closed the hatch, pulled the "Unicorn Gundam" up, and moved towards the rear hatch as it stepped over the collapsed "Banshee". "Please be careful not to get caught in the linear seat." Zinnerman however did not respond to Banagher's concern as he cradled Marida like a baby, and his bearded face, removed from the helmet, continued to look forward silent.

The "Garuda" had fallen into the clouds completely. There was a complete white outside the cockpit, to a point where fingers could not be seen when they were reached out. Despite the visibility that could not be any worse, it was a blessing in the aspect that the enemy units would have difficulty tracking them. "Besson, we got Marida. We're now escaping on the "Gundam". Can you catch us?" Zinnerman called out to the communicator, and upon seeing this, Banagher let the machine approach the hatch that had collapsed somewhat. He moved the remaining Beam Gatling Gun to its right hand and tried to look for the "DO-DAI Kai". At this moment, he noticed someone stumbling near the machine's feet.

It was Alberto. He, who was dressed in the tattered suit, looked up at

the “Unicorn Gundam” in a half-dazed manner. *He didn’t get onto the shuttle just now?* Banagher looked stunned as he saw that charred pudgy face on the enlarged window. A moment right after he grabbed onto the sticks, he again opened the cockpit hatch.

This action caused the cockpit, which was regaining normal air pressure within, to let out air. “Oi, what’s that for!?” Zinnerman growled. *How would I know?* Banagher hollered back in his heart as he let the “Unicorn Gundam” kneel down and brought the left hand of the machine to Alberto. Banagher could see the doubtful and deterred manner of Alberto’s actions, “GET ON!” and yelled with all his strength.

“YOU’LL DIE IF YOU STAY HERE! HURRY UP AND GET ON!”

Alberto lifted his head in a dumbstruck manner, and after blinking a few times, looked back at Banagher. “Ignore that man!” Zinnerman growled, but Banagher turned his back on the other man as he continued to stare at Alberto. Explosions could be heard from within the deck, and the collared shirt immediately fluttered with the wind as it flipped over. The burnt fragments grazed by the outside of the cockpit, and the black smoke covered Alberto for just a short moment, only for him to suddenly give a twisted stare back.

“…What kind of joke is this.”

For some reason, Banagher could hear that voice clearly, and felt a chill. Alberto pulled out the handgun in his pants as he yelled back.

“WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO SAVE ME!?”

The bullet was fired without hesitation, and a spark flashed by the hatch of the cockpit. It was a sharp sound of metal, but the intense emotions targeted at Banagher felt like it could penetrate through his body and mind, and he leaned back onto the linear seat.

“Why are you…!”

“YOU’RE THE CULPRIT BEHIND EVERYTHING! YOU TOOK EVERYTHING FROM ME! FATHER, THE “BOX”, MARIDA, EVERYTHING WAS…!”

The choking voice entered his ears, and the crisp gunshot sound echoed around the cockpit continuously. A bullet went through the hatch, grazed by the helmet and hit the headrest, and Banagher looked back at Alberto in a horrified manner. “Banagher!” Zinnerman growled as he grabbed the pilot by the arm, and Banagher’s hands were forced to pick up the sticks again. The sparks of the bullets being hit rang through the flank of the cockpit as it pursued the “Unicorn

Gundam" that was getting up.

"YOU MONSTER! WHO'S GOING TO BE SAVED BY YOU! SOMEONE LIKE YOU, SOMEONE LIKE YOU CAN JUST…!"

Alberto's face, which was covered with sweat and tears, vanished from the other side of the hatch. Banagher turned his back on the stare as he held his back and moved the machine. Humans could hate each other like this, even if they originated from the same life…no, it was precisely because of this reason. He had this chilling first-hand experience as he turned his stare to the clouds outside, and ceased all thoughts as he focused on flying the "Unicorn Gundam".

The machine was spat out from the rear hatch together with the rising smoke, and became a prisoner of gravity. As he watched the "Garuda" disappear from his eyes and into the clouds, Banagher started to look for the "DO-DAI Kai" on the motion sensor. The tilted "Garuda" continued to fire escape pods as numerous signals flashed on the sensor. The front hatch let out what seemed to be a SFS, probably with escaping crewmen inside. He saw the escape pods open their parachutes as they fell into the sea, and picked up on another machine that was rising quickly in the reverse direction. He then used its thrusters and AMBAC system to adjust himself and let the fall trajectory match with the machine. A few seconds later, the flat "DO-DAI Kai" frame appeared from between the clouds as it caught the "Unicorn Gundam" which lit its thrusters for an instant.

Banagher lowered the "Unicorn Gundam" as it landed on the platform, and let the manipulators grab onto the grips. Beams went right above the machine as the "DO-DAI Kai" turned to move upwards, and he was shocked by this unanticipated attack. He hurriedly tried to transfer the control of the "DO-DAI Kai" over, "Leave the enemy alone. Go right at the "Garencieres"!" But Zinnerman roared back. Banagher shook off the thought of Alberto in his mind, caught sight of an "Anksha" squadron closing in quickly from the rear camera, and fired the Beam Gatling to hold them off.

The disc-shaped machines immediately scattered and disappeared in the clouds. The "DO-DAI Kai" used this chance to rise up, broke through the mist, and arrived above the clouds. At the same moment, the sea of clouds below the eyes let out ripples, and a large shadow rose up from below it as the triangular ship appeared in his eyes. The "Garencieres" forced the clouds back like a submarine as it glided through the currents, showing its body. "Very good. Perfect timing." Upon hearing Zinnerman mutter, Banagher looked down at the "Garencieres" that was moving together, and once their relative

velocities matched, he stepped on the pedal.

The “Unicorn Gundam” jumped off the platform of the “DO-DAI Kai”, and after it was blown away for several meters, it leaned down on the deck of the “Garencieres”. He mounted the Beam Gatling gun back upon the arm, and grabbed onto the grip on the deck with one hand as he reached the other hand for the “DO-DAI Kai” above. There was no way they could get Besson on board without dragging the “DO-DAI Kai” towards the ship and tied its lift wire onto the “Garencieres”. *The speed was 0.6 Mach, and the “Unicorn Gundam” can barely use pull the DO-DAI Kai with its hands, but will the pursuers catch up?* Right when Banagher thought about this, mega-particle beams flashed by the blue skies, and the “DO-DAI Kai” was knocked off course by the shockwaves as it deviated off course.

The beam launchers on the side of the round discs fired as two “Ankshas” rose from below the clouds. “Hang on! Steady the machine!” Banagher exclaimed as he reached out towards the “DO-DAI Kai”. However, there was a holler from the wireless communicator full of noise, “Leave me!” and his hand on the sticks immediately tensed up.

(Protect the Captain and Marida! I’ll—)

There was a shrill noise, and a flash appeared above the head. The fireball was instantly blown to the back, and an explosion, followed by the fragments of the shattered “DO-DAI Kai” appeared on the rear camera visual. “Mr Besson…!”Banagher called out, but there was no reply, and the fireball instantly faded away. The two “Ankshas” passed through the black smoke and pursued on as they continued to fire beams.

Banagher gritted his teeth as he fired the remaining shots of the Beam Gatling at the enemy units, intending to shake them off. He was about to let the machine stand up, “Flaste, maximum battle speed.”, but Zinnerman muttered, cooling Banagher’s head down.

“There’s no time to let the “Gundam” enter the ship. Full speed ahead. Let’s shake off the pursuers and head towards space.”

Zinnerman exerted more strength into his arms that were cradling Marida, and restrained the anger on his face as he looked forward. He got something back, and lost something, and at this point, his heart was feeling the weight of these two sensations. Banagher secretly glanced behind to look at him, and then looked at Marida, who was resting peacefully in Zinnerman’s arms. At this moment, a large light exploded from behind, causing Banagher to look up in surprise.

There was a certain light that brightened the clouds below, and after a lightning-like flash, a deep boom echoed through the blue sky. The “Garuda” was most likely destroyed. Banagher let the machine like on the “Garencieres” deck, and even as he could not witness the explosion below the clouds, he continued to look at the light on the rear camera. The flickering black and red glow appeared in one corner of the clouds, and showed the end of this large machine. The “Garencieres” started to accelerate, and that light immediately faded from below his eyes as it entered the blind spot of the ship, and disappeared.

Big brother. Banagher thought of this term that felt surreal as he closed the window. He recalled the face of his blood relative that would leave a scar in his heart forever, and took the incoming G-force with his body while looking at the blue sky expanded in front of him. The “Garencieres” seemed to be basking under the bright sunlight without doing anything as its three engines were at full throttle, rising through the skies. The blue seas that were clearer than the skies appeared, silently sending off a ship that was leaving Earth.

Part 17[edit]

There was a little opening in the thick clouds, and the sunlight shone upon the landscape like a sword. It shone upon Torrington Base, full of rubble and black smoke, and also lit the front deck of the “Ra Cailum” which had its main cannons wrecked. The porthole of the ordinary bridge was covered by the warm sunlight.

“We got confirmation that the “Garuda” was destroyed.”

Meran spoke as he took up the telegram the communications operator handed over. The battle had ended just an hour ago, and he, who had been raising an eyebrow over how slow their comrades in Torrington were doing, finally started to regain his usual composure. “It’s said that the Captain and everyone else under him managed to escape safely.” Upon hearing this report from behind, Bright turned towards the porthole in front. He looked on at the second main cannon that was still hot after the direct hit bitterly, “What about the “Garencieres”?” and asked without looking back.

“It’s said that they’ve escaped. From their acceleration, it seems that they intend to fly to space. The “Unicorn” is with it too.”

Meran ended his report with a meaningful tone, and stood beside Bright. Despite the unexpected loss of the “Garuda”, the situation was still developing in the way Bright hoped for. “Is that so.” He simply answered as he moved his hand to the bottom of the porthole and

inspected the situation of the base located on the ship's starboard. Ignoring the gentle sunlight shining through the clouds, the only term that could describe the devastation in Torrington Base was messy.

The command tower situated in the center of the base was still smoking, and there were fire trucks and ladder trucks surrounding it. The barracks was basically rubble in the form of a hill, and the relief-aid work was still proceeding as four-wheeled drives of the ambulance squad were rushing through the base. The reason why the vehicles could be seen snaking around was most likely because the drivers had to avoid the holes and cracks on the road. The little MLRS scattershots rained down from above bombarded the surface that could barely be called a road, leaving behind wounds that the base could not remove in short order. The only ones that could move freely were the mobile suits, and the "Jestas" of the "Ra Cailum" were sent out to aid, as he could spot them removing the rubble from the porthole. It would not be an exaggeration to say that they were the only ones moving the burnt debris of the Zeon machines, and two "Jestas" were removing the wreckage of a Dom-type mobile suit on the runway, where there was an explosion that left a radial burn mark.

It was said that the situation was the same on the coast, as the base Defense squadron took tremendous damage while the Zeon forces were completely annihilated. The Zeon remnants could have abandoned the base, but they came to attack with a suicidal intent. Even if there were machines that could survive miraculously, how would those people fare in the future—Bright suddenly thought about it, and sighed hard. He looked up at the "Jestas" with the Tri-Stars logo sprayed on their shoulders, thought of Lieutenant Nigel's expression, "Inform the mobile suit squad about this too." And spoke to Meran.

"Once they hear this, those proposing to chase after them will probably give up."

The Tri-Stars were the ones who proposed to ride on the Base Jabbers and argued for it for some time. Perhaps the way they were shaken off by the "Unicorn" so easily made them really unhappy, as even the usually unflappable Nigel would not back off. *Ensign Riddhe sure is troublesome for leaving alone like that, how young he is…* Bright concluded while harboring the thoughts of an old man, "Yes" felt that this reply from his First Officer was not really convincing, and glanced over. Meran paid attention to the stares of the other crewmen in the bridge, and asked,

"Are you certain they can handle this…?"

Meran approached the porthole and narrowed his eyes as he looked

up at the sky. “we can only do this now.” Bright followed his stare as he answered.

“Let us believe in them. We can only rely on their luck now.”

Meran continued to look up quietly. There were *those people* who were rising up to space, and *those people* who were waiting to receive them in orbit. Bright imagined their meeting in between sky and space as he continued to look up at the clouds letting through light. He had already done what he could do, and the rest would have to depend on their luck. The ships and the fleet were attracted by the “Gundam”, and formed a relationship because of it—but one could only hope that they could get along. The only way they could break through the situations where they could not deviate from would be to rely on the power of possibilities humanity had. That boy called Banagher was born with the power called harmony.

It's all up to you now. Bright looked up at the clouds that never stopped with the flow as he tightened the grip on the windowsill. The sunlight, which appeared for a while, was immediately covered, and the thick clouds shadowed the “Ra Cailum” on the ground from above.

Part 18[edit]

The landing deck at the aft was bent straight and the rear cannon seemed to be packed in under the battleship to hide it. The main thrusters in the middle of the aft were deployed to the back, and once the ballute appeared around the nozzles, the “Nahel Argama” got ready to enter the atmosphere.

“Ballute’s ready.”

“60 seconds till thrust reverse. Everyone, prepare for it.”

Mihiro’s tense voice rang after the navigation officer’s as it echoed through the bridge. Otto put on his normal suit helmet as his hands grabbed onto the Captain’s seat armrests. He went through a similar experience on another ship, but this was the first time he was using the Ballute on the “Nahel Argama”. He looked around at the backs of the crewmen, wearing their heavy normal suits, licked his dry lips, “What’s the movement of our target?” and asked the sensor operator.

“Current altitude is 98km. Course is steady, but it’s not at the speed to leave the atmosphere yet. Estimated point of contact is adjusted at Minus 8.”

“Just like what Commanding Officer Bright, huh…right, continue to send a signal. Our ship[shall remain right above the thermosphere,

and we'll use the tether cables to pull up this target. All hands, take note of the ship's height and velocity. If we go in too deep, we'll be caught by gravity and unable to escape the atmosphere."

If they become the prisoner of gravity itself, the thruster power of the "Nahel Argama" itself would not be sufficient for them to return to space. Otto did not really hear the tense voices of the crewmen repeating as he looked at the silhouette of Earth that was almost at eye level through the window. It had been less than 2 hours since Commanding Officer Bright suddenly notified them. The entire crew hurried to get ready, and though they managed to catch sight of the target on the sensor, it really felt surreal to him. The target ship got clearer, and he wondered if he got duped by his superior. If the data on the optical sensor was correct, it would be—

"It's the "Garencieres"—the disguised trading ship affiliated to the"Sleeves"."

It seemed that Liam too had the same suspicions as she ostensibly talked to herself. Upon hearing this, Otto looked at the tall First Officer standing beside him.

"No doubts about it. It's the ship that once followed us from "Industrial 7". Is this fine?"

"There's nothing good or bad about it. CO Bright gave us this direct order, so we can only follow it."

"Is that so…"

"Besides, no matter what kind of mission the higher-ups give us is, it's good to have something to do."

This is certainly better than revolving around Earth like a ghost. Liam looked back at Otto, who forced this smile, and slowly relaxed her lips as she leapt from the floor. As a comrade who spent the past 2 weeks or so with nothing to do, the First Officer could understand how hard it would be to kill time without a motive. No matter what happened next, it would be better than to feel the emptiness of being unable to do anything. Otto grumbled in his heart desperately, but he found himself much more relaxed than before, and turned his wryly smiling face to the front. Once Liam sat down, "10 seconds to Reverse Thrust." The navigation officer reported as his vice rang through the corridor. The "Nahel Argama" began its countdown as it hovered in low orbit around the still Earth silently.

Once the countdown reached zero, the reverse thruster flares were lit in unison, and the G-force from behind fell upon the inside of the ship

that suddenly stopped. As the ship slowed down gradually, it started to break off from its orbital velocity, and started to fall. The verniers let out flares to stabilize the “Nahel Argama”, which lifted the only catapult deck it had left as it got ready to head down to Earth from its aft.

The air surrounding the ship got gradually thicker, and as the ship accelerated, it let out a rattling sound as it shook. After falling to below 150km in altitude, the white armor turned red hot, prompting the ballute system, chained with the altitude meter, into action. The armor around the thruster nozzles sprung out, and a large balloon expanded from it, covering the aft of the “Nahel Argama” in an airtight manner. The bowl-shaped air cushion formed a ballute that was 200m in diameter, which worked to negate the resistance from the atmosphere.

The large pressure below the bowl continued to let out high-pressured air, blocking out the frictional heat from the aft. The “Nahel Argama” used its ballute, opened on the back, to dive into the atmosphere. The air in the thermosphere got thicker, and the shock cones surrounding the ship dragged a long tail above the atmosphere.

Part 19[edit]

(You’re saying the “Nahel Argama” sent us a report?)

A gruff voice reached Mineva’s ears as soon as she stepped into the bridge. She swallowed her urge to ask what was going on as she stood still, but Flaste, who ignored her arrival, “It’s opening its ballute and descending. If this keeps up, we’ll meet the “Nahel Argama” head on!” growled back as he sat on the navigation seat.

“They say they’re going to use the tether to put this ship. The Federation sure know about our situation here. Do we return to Earth now?”

(No, if we go back now, we’ll just be hunted by the pursuers. Since there’s no place for resupply, space in front of us here will be the last chance.)

The rumbling sound of the atmosphere boomed as it hurled upon the ship, and Zinnerman’s reply was mixed in with this sound through the contact loop. The other crewmen hoped that Mineva would stay at somewhere safe, but she felt that there was no difference in wherever she was in this situation. She stood beside the Captain’s seat and looked up at the red hot light on the bridge window. They were about to go beyond 100km in height, and though the air had become a lot thinner, the “Garencieres” that was flying several times that of supersonic had to bear a burden that was beyond normal. It was not

as difficult as landing towards Earth by making use of the atmosphere resistance, but ships moving through the thermosphere had to endure the frictional heat, and the external temperature was already more than 1000 degrees Celsius. One might not see it from this point, but the “Unicorn Gundam” lying on the deck was also surrounded by extreme heat as well, and the white machine was certainly becoming red hot.

Banagher aside, Zinnerman and Marida, who was said to be rescued, could not leave that cockpit. *Can the machine hang on in such heat and resistance?* Mineva knew that it was pointless, but she looked up at the ceiling, and at that moment, the turbines let out a dull sound, and the ship rattled. Alec paid attention to her, who supported herself off the wall after this jolt, “Please sit down!” as he called out with a softened voice from the steering seat. there were not too many options on the cramped bridge, so Mineva sat on the empty Captain’s seat. “Now what do we do?” she heard Flaste ask anxiously.

“The ship’s full of symptoms now, and the “Gundam” on the deck will cause more resistance. If this keeps up, we won’t be able to return to space!”

(But we can’t let the Federation ships catch us—)

(That ship’s here to get us.)

A sudden voice interrupted Zinnerman, and Flaste brought his chin back in surprise. Mineva’s body experienced a flash as she understood that it was Banagher’s voice, and brought her eyes to the wireless communicator headset. (What are you saying?) Zinnerman asked, but Banagher answered, (If it’s the “Nahel Argama”, it’s here for us…!) his voice ringing in Mineva’s eardrums clearer than before.

(They’re not enemies, Mr Flaste. Please follow their instructions.)

(What kind of joke is this!? Flaste, lower the height and change our course. Let the “Gundam” enter the hatch. We’ll be able to escape the atmosphere with this ship alone.)

Upon hearing the two voices argue with each other through the communicator, Flaste looked troubled as he exchanged looks with Alec. “But if we lower our altitude now, we’ll enter the enemy’s Defense zone…” Flaste said as he started to calculate the orbit, but Mineva ignored him as she stared at the beacon blinking on the sensor. That Federation ship had predicted the movements of the “Garencieres”, and indicated that it would pull the ship into space by tether. Logically, they should suspect that the ship had an intention to take down the “Garencieres”, but it was too early of them to give the notification. If the

ship really intended to defeat them all in one swoop, they would choose to appear at the most opportune moment, and would not have to indicate its ship classification and course. The signal on the sensor was certainly the “Nahel Argama”, and they already sent over the expected rendezvous on their own.

It was just like what Banagher said, there was no antagonistic feeling here. Flaste and the rest felt the same, and that was why they could not respond to Zinnerman’s instructions immediately. She looked back at the ceiling of the bridge, and had a hallucination of the “nahel Argama” approaching them for behind. The Federation battleship was related to her out of fate ever since the “Industrial 7” incident, and would actually appear in this instance. It did not have any intent to antagonize, and declared its intention to pull the “Garencieres” into space; everything just felt like it was planned beforehand—

“Flaste, maintain our course. I want to make contact with the Federation ship.”

Mineva gave this order decisively as she looked forward. Flaste and Alec turned their heads around at the same time, (Princess…!?) and Zinnerman’s doubtful voice rang through the communicator.

(Banagher has a point. That ship’s now beyond the control of both the Federation and Zeon. I don’t think they appeared here just to catch us.”

As she spoke, she asked herself, *Is that so?* However, she felt that there was no mistake. She was not as certain as Banagher, but she could sense that the situation was changing. The “Nahel Argama” was a hot potato no one dared to touch after the Vist Foundation made it its pawn, and would certainly be left in Earth’s orbit by the Federation. The “Ra Cailum” had taken damage, but it certainly was not their style not to pursue on, and a certain person’s intention was vaguely hidden in it—Flaste was wondering if she was okay, and she looked back at him, giving this non-verbal meaning *You should be able to understand*. Once that was said and looked forward as she held onto the Captain armrest. (Nope, don’t listen to the Princess’ words, Flaste.) Zinnerman’s stubborn voice rang through the communicator.)

“Zinnerman…!”

(Princess, a lot of sacrifices from the ship has been made up till now. We really shouldn’t surrender ourselves and put the deaths of the soldiers in vain.)

“You’re just saying that because of your grudge. If you really want to

avenge their sacrifices, you have to follow your heart bravely."

The words from the Queen herself caused Flaste and Alec to tense their shoulders. Mineva sensed Zinnerman's speechless breath through the communicator, "You should be able to understand." And emphasized calmly.

"If it's really an enemy, it'll choose a smarter move. The deaths of the many soldiers brought that Federation ship over. Nobody has the right to mess up this chance for the sake of the situation or pride. Marida's saved already, and you want to put her at risk?"

There was no response from the communicator. The marker of the "Nahel Argama" was certainly approaching, and as time continued to pressure them, she waited for Zinnerman's reply silently. Banagher too had the same feeling. There was no certain proof, but there was an instinct kicking in, telling them there was no mistake, and she held her breath and waited for Zinnerman's decision. In this uncertain situation itself, this instinct alone was the only thing supporting Marida from behind.

Part 20[edit]

The thin air in the thermosphere blew upon the ship, causing the "Unicorn Gundam" lying on the deck to be red hot, and the all-view monitor was dyed a pink light. Bangher held onto the sticks that were vibrating without stopping as he looked at Zinnerman's face. The bearded face was cradling Marida as he looked at a certain spot silently, but just would not let his silent stare look back. Banagher looked at those black eyes devoid of emotion, and could not tell if he was hesitating.

Maybe this won't do. The weakened soul whispered to Banagher. There was too much baggage for Zinnerman to act on instinct. This was the gravity called responsibility—but Zinnerman still came to save him. Even if it was the inadvertent result of wanting to get this "Unicorn", his actions brought about the chance to save Audrey and Marida at the same time.

Sometimes, if we act not on logic, but by what our hearts say, we'll get unexpected results. Banagher told himself. He could only trust in the other man as he looked at the red vision on the monitor. Audrey had the same feeling too. Even if the world denied it, he still had a strength supporting him, allowing him to fight on based on his beliefs.

The "Garencieres" moved down the Equator to the East, and was intending to use the Earth's rotation to enter space; the "Nahel

Argama" was moving in the same direction as it approached from behind. There was only one chance for both sides to meet. If the "Nahel Argama" orbit the Earth once more, the "Garencieres" would fall due to a lack of fuel. Banagher adjusted the angle of the rear camera, tried to catch sight of that red light on the enlarged window, and felt sweat on his forward. *Hurry up!* He resisted the urge to prompt, and as he gritted his teeth, "Flaste." Zinnerman spoke with a heavy tone.

"Continue forward. Get ready to meet with the Federation ship. Follow their instructions and raise the Grapple Beam."

Zinnerman glared at Banagher, who looked back inadvertently, and looked away awkwardly, "It's better than remaining on Earth and getting ourselves picked off. Stay on guard!" Upon hearing Zinnerman add on, (Roger that!) Flaste answered with a somewhat cheery tone. *As expected, everyone has the same feeling.* Banagher secretly felt delighted. He recognized that the situation was guiding them to the necessary path, and the power of the common view was with everyone. The term Newtype appeared in his mind for an instant, and he grabbed onto the control sticks tightly as he caught sight of the current location of the approaching "Nahel Argama" on the monitor. The displacement between them was less than 100km. the enlarged window with a lot of noise on it showed the light, and the plasma light from the ballute was the only thing that could be seen as the target looked just like a burnt meteor.

The ballute looked like an umbrella on fire as it opened up from the aft, and the "Nahel Argama" was closing in at a speed of Mach 20. "That's…" Zinnerman muttered as the ship brought the long tether cable above the "Garencieres" and gave a light signal from the belly. The "Garencieres" shot out its Grapple Arm, and a long crane-like pillar rose from behind the "Unicorn Gundam" that was prowled. The mast hook at the center of the ship looked like a fishing rod, and the pillar that was approximately 20m long started to reach towards the "Nahel Argama".

The "Nahel Argama" would immediately shoot its tether to hook onto the mast hook, and the "Garencieres" dangling by the wire would be able to use the other ship's momentum to gain acceleration, escape the atmosphere, and enter space; this was the theory behind a tether thrust. The "Nahel Argama" gradually passed by above the "Garencieres", and their displacement was more than 10km. This would be the maximum limit for a standard tether cable, but would they be able to get close? As the signal continued to flash, Banagher and Zinnerman held their breaths as they waited for the wire. However, an impact jolted the cockpit from below, causing their hearts to panic. The

“Garencieres” gave a dull sound again, and the ship descended by 10km or so.

The “Garencieres” tried to maintain its altitude, but it could not remain steady as it inched away from the “Nahel Argama” above it, trembling. “What’s going on!?” Zinnerman shouted, but Flaste yelled back, (The turbine output is dropping! We’re at our limit!) Upon hearing their conversation, Banagher looked up at the “Nahel Argama” covered by the shock cones. *We can’t make it, the tether’s about to fire.* “Not good…!” Once he inadvertently said this, a white light brighter than the signal flashed by his head, and the tether cable that was fired through left a black line in the middle of the scorching colors.

The thrusters located at the front hook let out a flare, and the tether cable broke through the wall of shock cones as it flew right at the “Garencieres”. The latter ship forced itself to move towards what seemed to be the end of a spider strand dangling right in front of it, and was ostensibly forcing its last ounce of energy on running the turbines. The long Hyper Carbon Nanotube was reaching forward at full speed, and upon seeing it reach above the “Unicorn Gundam”, he immediately lifted the sticks and stepped on the pedal.

The “Unicorn Gundam” got up from the deck, raised its right hand to grab the tip of the tether, and used its left hand to grab onto the Grapple Beam firmly. It raised its thrusters to grab the tether cable that was out of fuel, and intended to pull it down to the arm of the Grapple Beam, but a rapidly falling feeling struck Banagher. The “Unicorn Gundam” feet left the deck of the “Garencieres” which dropped in altitude again, causing it to float into space as it grabbed onto the tether and arm as it experienced a tugging feeling, and it ended up pulled by both sides as it was basked in the scorching currents.

The frame was pulled to the limit as it let out a rattling sound trying to pull up the falling “Garencieres”. The overload sign appeared on the display board, and the alarm indicating insufficient power rang by his ears. *If I let go here—this one line linking them will remain severed forever!* “Don’t force yourself! The machine will split if you keep this up!” Zinnerman exclaimed, but Banagher ignored him as he used all his strength to pull the sticks up, and opened the throttles of the machine to its maximum.

“This “Unicorn Gundam” isn’t for show…!”

The “Unicorn Gundam” took the mass of the “Garencieres” on one side and the thrust of the “Nahel Argama” on the other as it let out a metallic roar. The Psycoframe was glowing brighter, and Banagher could sense the luminous light shining through the cockpit. He gritted his teeth at the same time as he gathered his entire will into the machine.

(Banagher…!) Audrey’s call faded. The machine let out a cry as it reached its limit, and Banagher felt the pain of his body being ripped into pieces. This was because the Psycommu System was starting to

reverse, causing the machine to feel a burden, turning it into a sensation of pain that was transferred to the brain. There was no reason for a mobile sui alone to support the mass of two ships. *Let go, let go!* the system was warning him as it echoed through his head, and he let out a groan from his gritting teeth. *That's too reckless already, isn't it?* the timidity within him started to whisper, and right when his numb hand was about to let go of the sticks, a hand reached over from the side and grabbed it.

The fuzzy warmth of the body came from this other hand, and the tortured senses eased silently. Banagher widened his eyes, looked over at the owner of the hand, and found Marida, who was lying in Zinnerman's hand, opening her eyes slightly as she looked back at him. *You should be saying 'even so' now, right?* Her smiling expression let out these words, and that hand that was holding Banagher's seemed like it was going to spread all the warmth in its body. The raging heat flowing within the body went from the hand to the entire body, and Banagher again gathered strength on his hands grabbing the sticks. The luminous light on the Psycoframe got brighter and brighter, and at that moment, the light expanded as it seemingly saturated.

The red luminous light that came from the machine was swallowed by a new gentle light that rose out, and both lights gradually became one. That light, which may look green, yellow, blue or even red at times, filled the Psycoframe of the "Unicorn Gundam", and the rainbow-like refracted light spread across to the surrounding mobile suits. Banagher saw a small needle-like glow scatter around, and saw the "Garencieres" and the "Nahel Argama" basked in that light. "What is this light…?" Upon hearing Zinnerman murmur, Banagher started to hallucinate as he saw his body become light that spread across space.

This light was different from the savage light that appeared when he was battling the "Banshee", and as it surrounded the "Unicorn Gundam" like an aurora, the machine that was stretched to its limit started to move. Because of the arms pulling the tether and the Grapple Beam, the massive hull of the "Garencieres" was gradually pulled up. As both ships closed in distance, Banagher's thoughts flew through the light and into space, and sensed the thoughts of the humans on both ships.

Audrey was calling from the Captain's seat, Flaste and Alec were steering the "Garencieres", Captain Otto was giving the instructions, Ensign Mihiro was giving notices through the ship, First Officer Liam was running to the engine room, Haro was floating through the corridors of the ship, Takuya in the mechanic uniform was running

along the mobile suit deck, and Micott in the refugee block seemed to realize something as she looked up—

However, Marida, who was tightly embraced by Zinnerman in his arms, let out a smile beside the shell Banagher left on the cockpit. Banagher looked down at the two hands pulling the sticks, and felt the warmth of the flesh from them…once his spiritual consciousness realized this, the hook mast was latched on, and the feeling of the tightened rope pulled Banagher back into his flesh.

The “Nahel Argama” lit its Reverse Thrust as it accelerated. The “Garencieres” hull was dragged, and accelerated as it was pulled up. The roaring winds passed by to the back, and the scorching colors of the sky dulled as the unblinking starry space covered the two ships from above while the deafening silence enveloped them. The resistance of the atmosphere covering the ships disappeared, and the power of inertia pushed both ships forward. The “Garencieres” and the “Nahel Argama” left the atmosphere at the same time, becoming two satellites orbiting around Earth. On their paths, one could see the Earth in its night state, space with no signs of the moon, and the countless stars.

The “Unicorn Gundam” pulled the tether cable linking the ships as it too returned to space safely. As the rainbow weakened, the Psycoframe was reverting back to its original red color, and the colors scattered around let out an afterglow of a trail. This afterglow became a belt of light linking the Federation ship and the Neo Zeon ship, also leaving behind a bright aurora that would not disappear from a corner of Earth for a while.

Part 21[edit]

The flashing colorful light danced in the darkness. It looked like the scales of a butterfly as it spread across the sealed eyelids in a fantastical manner, before disappearing without warning.

Alberto opened his eyes. The light in reality was too sharp, and he closed his eyes before opening them slowly again. What he saw first was the sea surface from the sky. The waves of the glittering seas were reflecting the sunlight, and a strong light that was beyond the level of a fantasy radiated in front of his eyes, stimulating them.

He looked over at the sea surface in a half-awake manner, and once the vibration of the communicator vibrating under his buttocks pulled his senses back to reality, he turned to moe his head leaning on the wall. He was aching all over, probably due to being in the cramped places for such a long time. *Is this some mobile suit cockpit?* he

touched the curved monitor panel at his feet and intended to look up at the linear seat beside him, but at this moment, a shadow appeared in a corner of the all-view monitor, and his heart jolted, beating his chest.

There was a mobile suit riding on the “Anksha” in its mobile suit form, gliding diagonally below Alberto’s sights. He realized that it was the “Banshee”, and turned his awakened face to the panel at his feet. The machine’s limbs were not damaged. *The flank should have taken a direct hit. How’s the situation?* Alberto looked down at the machine lit by the reflected light off the sea, and thought of the name Marida, “We can’t seem to find the pilot.” before a voice rang beside him.

He lifted his face and looked over at the linear seat to find Riddhe Marceans there. Riddhe looked at him for a moment, before turning his somewhat forsaken expression forward as he activated the display board. He opened the expanded window to show the “Banshee” closeup as it laid down on the disc, but Alberto’s face remained unmoved. *How did things end up like this? Why is this guy—no, where is this place?* Alberto could not clear the doubts rising up his heart at the same time as he focused on looking at Riddhe’s face. In the end, Riddhe turned around in an annoyed manner, removed his helmet, reached for his blond hair, “Since you’re awake, pull out the assistance chair yourself.” And spoke coldly.

“I’m already out of breath trying to pull your unconscious self on board. You’re an Anaheim employee, so you should know the construct of a mobile suit, right?”

In the face of this glance, Alberto looked around the inner wall of the cockpit again. Since he could see the sea surface, it meant that this mobile suit was not on a Base Jabber, which meant that it could fly in atmosphere on its own. *This means that I’m on Riddhe’s machine, the transformable “Delta Plus” in its wave rider form?* Upon realizing this, Alberto calmed down slightly as he exhaled. He searched his tattered clothes, realized that he had no realy injuries, and turned towards Riddhe again. “Why did you save me?” he asked, but Riddhe was unwilling to look at him in the eyes, “That’s how things are going now.” He answered with a sigh.

“I too passed out after I was shot down by the “Banshee”. By the time I woke up and got back to the sinking “Garuda”, you and the empty “Banshee” were the only ones lift.”

Riddhe looked over at the “Banshee”, lifeless like a puppet as it laid on the “Anksha”, and narrowed his eyes. “The “Unicorn” has vanished.” *And Mineva too…* some heartfelt words could be heard right after this mutter, and Alberto did not intend to ask further as he

looked further. *His love affair may have ended*, this understanding landed upon the cavity in Alberto's chest and created ripples in his hollow body.

Both of them were descendants of those cursed by the "Laplace Box", and both lost their fleeting love—the "Delta Plus" ferried the birds of a feather filled with suspicion and disappointment as it flew through the evening sky. Alberto had no idea of where they were going or where they should go as he looked at the sky and sea that was dyed amber. The "Anksha", ferrying the unmanned "Banshee", turned with the sea surface behind it as it pivoted its way through the crimson sky, letting out an empty trail of jet cloud.

Volume 8 – The Sky and the Stars

Chapter 1[edit]

Part 1[edit]

"Nigel Garrett, Uniform 007, launching!"

The countdown timer showed 0, and the catapult was fired. Nigel Garrett grabbed the control sticks as he took on the G force that amounted to a maximum of 5G.

The catapult deck that slid by below was a lot shorter than the one on the "Ra Cailum", and the launch velocity was slower as a result. Once it left the deck, Nigel stepped on the pedal. The "Jesta" got into the darkness of space as it used its thrusters, and pulled itself away from the Base Jabber in front of it. Right when the 20m tall machine was about to use its manipulator to hold onto the platform, the machine behind was at the start of the catapult deck.

Daryl McGuninness "Jesta" too followed the same process as it launched from the catapult of the "Carrot". This ship of the Clop-class was only approximately half as heavy as the "Ra Cailum", as there was only one deck that was aligned to the bow. Daryl's machine had to follow the same path as Nigel's as it merely activated the AMBAC on its limbs to adjust itself and connected itself under Nigel's machine. Unlike the machines with specifications for Earth use, the Base Jabber for space use had platforms on the top and below, and the flat machine, commonly called the "Clog", could allow for two machines to ride on it. The tremors came when Daryl's machine connected on, and Nigel stepped on the pedal again. The "Jestas" crouching on the platforms lit their thrusters again, and the SFS ferrying them started to accelerate. It took the thrust from Daryl's machine and pulled its distance from the "Carrot" and entered the darkness of the vacuum.

He activated the laser communication with the mothership as he looked around the all-view monitor. The Earth was behind him, the size of a basketball, and there were 3 celestial objects that could be seen above in front of him, Capella, Aldearan, Rigel. The stars that were CG corrected for astronomical observations were giving off unnaturally large glows. He could see the “Tenenbaum” that was of the same class as the “Clog” below him, and numerous thruster flares could be seen dragging from the side, forming silver trajectories in space. Those were the lights released by the mobile suits of the Tenenbaum fleet.

There were two SFS, one “Stark Jegan” and two normal “Jegans”. Nigel saw that they were also headed to L3, turned to the space region in front of him where the “Luna II” could be seen; then, he spotted the Base Jabber catch up from behind, and the 3rd machine riding on it appeared in his sights.

The beam cannons and Gatling cannons equipped on its backpack were protruding out, and the enhanced armor had missiles and grenades all over its limbs. This heavy-armed “Jesta Cannon” included a hand-wieldable beam rifle and a grenade launcher set with physical ammunition. The bulk of the machine really complemented the stumpy Watts Stepney. “Looks heavy there, Watts.” Nigel looked at the hulking machine that was standing watch on the “Clog” as he muttered this, (It’s nothing much.) However, the gruff voice came, and Watts let his personalized Base Jabber spin once.

(We’ve been trained under Earth’s gravity. We’ll repay them the debt we owe from Torrington Base.)

(We’ll leave it to you, Tri-Stars brothers. That disguised merchants ship caused our Carrot fleet some suffering too.)

The lieutenant in charge of piloting the Base Jabber injected through the contact loop. (Roger that. We won’t forget the grace of this pit-stop.) Upon hearing Daryl’s voice, Nigel turned forward again with a stare intending to hunt the enemies. The Moon was across the other side of the Earth, and the space in front of him looked like a bottomless abyss. The radars could not work under the effects of the Minovsky Particles, and they could not detect the target’s thruster flares; however, they could be certain that the “Garencieres” was nearby. The fake Neo Zeon merchant ship took down the mobile suits of the “Carrot” and wrecked the “Ra Cailum” to a point of paralysis. With the “Unicorn” it stole, this “Sleeves” ship was definitely somewhere in this pitch darkness, hoping to meet up with the main fleet.

It had been 3 days since the Zeon remnants attack on Torrington Base. The “Ra Cailum” could not leave the ground as its engines were wrecked, and the reason why the Tri-Stars were the only ones who went up to space was because Nigel and company insisted on not letting go of them, and the “Carrot” needed to make up for the loss in fighting strength it had, resulting in an outcome where both objectives were met. They immediately launched from a nearby launch base, and met up with the 3rd team, 16th Task Force of Londo Bell that was moving by in low orbit. However, it seemed that the “Garencieres” had already left Earth’s Absolute Defense zone, and since they were unable to keep track of their target, the “Carrot” and the “Tenenbaum”

were surrounded by an urge to give up. But one hour ago, the atmosphere changed when they detected a source of Minovsky Particles moving quickly.

They still did not know where the “Garencieres” headed towards L3 was headed towards as it scattered its Minovsky Particles. Lagrange Point 3 between Earth and the Moon had only the Side 7 colony cluster that was under construction and the “Luna II”, the stronghold of the Federation space fleet; it would be hard to imagine that there would be “Sleeve” bases nearby there. Side 6, where the Neo Zeon fleet was rumored to be hiding in, was at L5, a completely different place, and it was improbable for a rendezvous to be held here.

Where is it going—no, more importantly, where has it been during the 3 days after the commotion in Torrington Base, and what had it been doing? Nigel felt the excitement in him as he stared at the location the mothership indicated. (Did you hear, Leader? The rumors regarding the “Nahel Argama” of Team 4?) the communicator rang, and Daryl spoke as they were exactly 100,000km away from Earth behind them.

“You’re talking about the ship that went missing after carrying out the secret mission of the Senate Council?”

(Yeah, the “Carrot” crew said that they saw it before the attack on Torrington, before we arrived there.)

Nigel felt a chill down his spine, and once he confirmed that this was simply a lone channel with Daryl’s unit, “Oh”, he answered while pretending not to care about it. (It seemed that they activated the Ballute, and the angle’s extremely acute if they were planning to enter Earth.) Upon hearing the rest of Daryl’s words, Nigel felt the chill on his spine intensify.

(It’s the same time as when that disguised merchant ship entered space. I don’t feel this way, but Captain Bright’s attitude has been weird…)

“Yeah, it doesn’t feel like he wants us to chase after them.”

Now that I think of it, it seems that the slow response during the Torrington raid was deliberate. Captain Bright would normally have us chase after the enemies even if our butts have to be spanked. (That Ensign Riddhe used to belong to the “Nahel Argama”, right?) Nigel kept his voice down.

(And if he has any beef with the pilot of the “Unicorn”, this so-called secret mission from the Senate Council…)

We can deduce it. The weird happenings that had been going on this month or so, from the Dakar incident to the Torrington attack incident all had the involvement of the “Unicorn” in it. It was a product of the UC plan—the crux of the Earth Federation Space Realignment plan, and though it was meant to destroy the Zeon myth of Newtypes, why would the entire army be up in arms for this? *He felt the sweat on his back freeze, and remained silent for a moment, (We see it!) But Watt’s call caused his heart to jump suddenly.*

(L 8 degrees above. I’m going first!)

The rocket flashes of the Base Jabber ferrying the “Jesta Cannon” lit once he said this, and the accelerating machine faded to the top left corner. However, it was moving rather fast as it had only Watts’ unit on it. (Oi, Watts!) Daryl yelled, but Nigel stopped Daryl, saying, “It’s okay, let him be.” He checked the source of light above the indicated location, and felt anxious that he did not detect this first, but he still activated his Base Jabber and chased after Watts’ machine.

“The “Jesta Cannon” range is longer. Let him delay them first.”

(But leader, he may start firing without telling the ship to stop first, you know?)

(GET OUT HERE, “UNICORN”! WE’LL SETTLE THE DEBT FROM BEFORE!) As Daryl expressed his concerned voice, Watts’ bellow was mixed in, and as he saw Watts’ unit charge right in, Nigel muttered to himself, “This doesn’t look good…”. Then, he let his Jesta leave the Base Jabber.

Daryl’s machine too left the Base Jabber, and the two machines got lighter as they followed Watts’ “Jesta”. The “Jegans” of the Tenenbaum squad leave their “Clogs”, got into battle formation, and started to accelerate; once Nigel saw that, he released a light signal, telling them that he was going to go first as he readied his beam rifle to fire any time soon. (We’re the Federation space fleet Londo Bell. “Garencieres”, please stop.) Daryl’s warning voice echoed, and Nigel looked at the image of the ship on the window that was enlarged to the maximum. There was no signs of slowing down as the “Garencieres” continued to accelerate as its engines, most probably modified illegally, continued to let out thrust.

It has the “Unicorn” on it, that monstrous white machine. Nigel saw the thruster flares that were almost buried within the starry lights, and was shocked that he could not feel any sense of pressure at all. (The “Carrot” is…!?) Suddenly, he heard a scream from the wireless communicator.

He opened the rear monitor window to check the location of the mothership. The sight of the “Carrot” was there, and he saw it surrounded by blueish-white fireballs, creating a blurry image that dyed everything white. A silhouette that seemed to belong to that of a mobile suit passed by in the foreground, and an explosion of light that appeared again covered the ship of the “Carrot”. (Leader!?) Daryl exclaimed, and Nigel let his machine do an emergency brake.

“Watts, return back! The mothership’s attacked!”

His mouth consciously moved as he felt the G-force forcing his eyeballs out. *A raid? From where?* These fragmented words vociferated in his mind. He did not have time to wait for Watts to answer as he turned the “Jesta” while going above the safety speed limit. (Where’s it coming from!?) (Is it the “Sleeves”?) he heard the messages through the wireless communicator as he accelerated the machine towards the “Carrot” deploying its anti-air fire.

The main cannons on the two flanks of the ship fired, and two beams cut through the space. An umpteenth fireball boomed after the pink mega-particle cannon shots were devoured by space, and in an instant, the enemy machine that were instantly lit moved to the belly of the ship. The body of the enemy unit’s frame moved in an arc, and the thruster unit on its back looked like a set of wings as it ostensibly soloed the “Carrot”. The bazooka in its hand continued to let out consecutive trails of flashes, and the physical ammunition that were fired let out trails of gas, hitting the tail of the ship directly. The engines at the back of the ship were engulfed by a large fireball, and the “Carrot” shattered in the midst of the flash.

The expanding fireballs immediately cooled, and the ship that was severed in half scattered in the gas clouds that remained. (The “Carrot”…!) A certain person’s cry entered Nigel’s overheated head, and he looked for the enemy machine that was hidden amongst the debris. It leapt onto a piece of rubble, changed its course at high speed, and spun the wings on its back at the “Tenenbaum”. The bright red color was captured by the enlarged window, CG corrected, and appeared in Nigel’s eyes.

“A red mobile suit…!? That’s…!”

The Second Coming of Char, Full Frontal of the “Sleeves”. The machine searched through the database, indicated the name of the machine “Sinanju”, and the mono-eyed enemy left the sensor while seemingly mocking them. It was still far away from Nigel, and he looked around, searching for the enemy machine that disappeared. The red machine continued to step upon the shrapnel of the “Carrot”

that was scattered around, and accelerated towards the next pretty by moving in a zigzag manner without using its burners. It looked like a replay of the “Char shot down 5 ships” recorded in the war. He employed a blitzkrieg by using a “Zaku” to shoot down 5 ships—

The “Tenenbaum” started to create a net of anti-air fire, but the “Sinanju” dodged it easily, charged right at it, and fired its bazooka. *I’m still not in range? Nigel resisted the urge to click his tongue as he turned his anxious stare at the fireballs that continued to ignite, only to be taken aback by another light that came from somewhere else.*

“What…?”

The “Jegan” that was moving on his right side was devoured by the beams, and its ripped limbs were scattered everywhere. The beams then grazed by the feet, and Nigel hurriedly evaded. *There’s still another enemy?* He looked at the sensor that did not respond at all, looked around, and found a beam pass right behind him, hitting the Base Jabber that was following behind.

The Base Jabber engine was blown up, and the cockpit at the bow was blown apart. (Where’s it coming from!?) Watts yelled. The “Jesta Canon” fired a sweeping trail of shots at the enemy it could not see, but the beam attacks did not stop as the mega particles charged in from the back of the “Jesta Cannon”, while another beam came flying in from another direction, grazing Daryl’s machine. (How many are there!?) Daryl called out. Nigel turned the machine and got ready to raise covering fire, but the strong killing intent he felt behind him caused him to feel a chill.

He lost all control over himself as he spun the beam rifle around and squeezed the trigger. The fire raced through the darkness, lighting something, and Nigel widened his eyes as he saw that strange object. The mini-object that looked like a remote-controlled object with 3 claws surrounding the cannons. It looked like an eagle claw, and the thick cable from its tail was lit by the light of the beam before disappearing into the darkness.

“Funnels!? No, that’s the INCOM…!?”

This was different from the funnels that were guided by the wireless system, but a psycommu installation that was wired and controlled from afar. The control was certainly better than a wireless system, but because it was cabled, there was a limit to the number of weapons that could be used. This still was a weapon that could attack in all directions on its own. Nigel did not make the mistake of chasing after that wired cannon at that moment as he only thought about how to

leave the surrounding killing intent, and moved the “Jegan” in a zigzag manner as he looked for the main unit controlling the cannons. The criss-crossing beams caught a second “Jegan”, causing the exploding machine to be engulfed in a hot ring of light. It appeared again, lighting the cabled INCOM, and the abnormally shaped mobile suit floating afar appeared in Nigel’s sights.

The purple machine had a mono-eyed head and streamlined limbs. It certainly was a mobile suit, but that abnormally large shoulders looked like petals as they covered the head with several layers or armor, causing the balance of the humanoid profile to resemble that a monster. The abnormally shaped machine had blooming metal petals, and it resembled a rose as the cables at its hands slid like vines while it freely controlled the 2 INCOMs freely. The “Stark Jegan” seemed to have detected this rose with a savage presence as it dodged the continuous volley of cannons and drew its beam saber. It used its beam saber, intending to cut the cable, and the missiles on its shoulders let out gas as two sets of missiles charged right at the purple enemy.

The rose-like machine shot out the high-output thrusters and flew through the vacuum at such a high speed that did not match its image at all. It accelerated towards the missiles, dodged elegantly. The missiles that were timed to explode in close proximity exploded, creating a flash. At that moment, it left the flash behind it, got down below, and the INCOMs attacked the “Stark Jegan”. The smooth cables wrapped the machine, and the 3 claws stabbed into the abdomen. The “Stark Jegan” twitched as it got caught, and once it raised its beam saber, the beams fired from point blank, shooting through the cockpit of the “Stark Jegan”.

The humanoid that was severed at the waist became a fireball. (This guy…!) Watts yelled out and let the “Jesta Cannon” charge forward as it fired the beam cannons and the Gatling cannons on its shoulders. Nigel saw the beams and the ammunition cut through vacuum towards the rose machine, “Leave it!” and growled as he slammed into Watts’ machine. The tussling machines flew aside, and the criss-crossed beams grazed by them at the last moment.

“Our priority is to defend the mothership. A formation!”

The roar went in the opposite direction of the spinal cord (Roger!), Daryl and Watts answered in unison. *First, we have to regroup and lure the enemy away—though it doesn’t feel useful against the monster Psycommu weapon and the Second Coming of Char.* Nigel suppressed his true thoughts as he turned his back against the

pursuing beams, and let the “Jestas” accelerate.

Daryl’s “Jesta” and Watts “Jesta Cannon” followed, forming a V. The “Tenenbaum”, which was was beside the icy cold debris wreckage of the “Carrot”, was surrounded by numerous fireballs, and looked like it was about to be whiffed out in the wind.

Part 2[edit]

3 small flies escaped from the hands that were reached out to the maximum range of the psycommu weapons. They barely managed to dodge the mega-particle cannons fired from the INCOMs and escaped towards the mothership that became a fireball.

“Too slow. You’re not going to have any place to return to now!”

Angelo Sauper smirked as he watched the three new machines, the “Jestas” raise their beam rifles and fire missiles. Of course, this level of interference was not enough of a threat to Full Frontal’s “Sinanju”, as the red machine passed through the shots fired from the 3 units and shot an umpteenth bazooka shot into the Clop-class ship, lighting a new explosion upon the 3 machines. The scattered shrapnel struck like numerous blades, causing the 3 “Jestas” to scatter away, and at this moment, the “Sinanju” released a strike to collapse the Clop-class bridge.

A final flash appeared from the middle of the ship, and the Clop-class collapsed as it was devoured by the fireball. “You see!” Angelo shouted, as he stepped on the pedal to move the machine forward, and recalled back to the INCOMs on its hands. The INCOMs were reeled in back onto the hands by the wires, and the 3 claws were clasped. The high-output thrusters set up all over the machine let out flares, and the large YAMS-132 “Rozen Zulu” raced through space.

The moveable frame was based on the Zulu-type, but this “Rozen Zulu” had the Psycommu system and Psycoframe built around the cockpit, and its mobility was something the “Geara Zulu” could not match. There was nothing Angelo could nitpick about the Psycommu installation as he could clearly feel the enemy intent of the 3 machines attacking the “Sinanju”, which dodged the fires from 3 directions, reloaded the bazooka magazine, and squeezed the trigger to fight back. When the second Clop-class cooled down suddenly after being sunk, a 380mm missile head charged forward, releasing a trail of smoke, and activated its proximity fuse. As it exploded, hundreds of metal balls scattered, hitting into the back of a “Jesta” that could was evading. The missile head’s power could not match the mega-particles traveling at sublight speed, but with the acceleration of the “Sinanju”

propelling it, it was not to be underestimated. The “Jesta” looked like it would leave the battlefront like this, but it quickly spun around to fire the beam rifle, causing Angelo to feel a shudder. Once the other 2 units regrouped and fired, that “Jesta” pulled its beam saber and closed in on the “Sinanju” without hesitation.

The two machines’ beam blades clashed, and interfering flashes appeared. While the other two machines fired to corner the “Sinanju”, the machine with the beam saber struck over at it, and the grazing high-heat particles severed the muzzle of the bazooka. The “Sinanju” lost its balance, but it immediately gave up on the bazooka and drew the 2 beam axes on the inside of its shield and attached them. The sickle-shaped beams blades were at maximum output, and the beams that appeared on both ends showed itself in the form of a weapon inherited from ancient Japanese Naginata.

“You made the Captain use the Naginata…!?”

1 against 3 was not the problem; that “Jesta” used perfect cooperation as a weapon to pressure Frontal. The “Sinanju” swung the beam naginata that was taller that itself with one hand to parry away the

enemy's slashes, and swung the blades at the other two machines that were offering covering fire. The beams blades spun quickly as they acted like a shield, deflecting the mega particles released by the Cannon-type machine. Angelo saw that it looked a little intimidated for a moment, but immediately fired grenades from it; in response, he activated the INCOMs from its hands. The hands of the "Rozen Zulu" shot out, and the claws filled with killing intent raced through space. The cables extending several kilometers reached out like a ferocious raptor as it barged into Frontal's battlefield.

The INCOM cannons flashed out beams, and the grenade was shot through the hot particles, becoming a fireball. The "Sinanju" did not let go of this opportunity as it counterattacked, melting the left arm of the "Jesta" that was trying to parry. There was the calm will of faltering, fear, anger, and a calm will restraining these emotions, and the combined emotions from the 3 enemy machines raised through, forming a weak current in the perception, and Angelo felt a pressure pressing on his head, feeling incensed by it. *If I can shoot down the source of that calm will, the guy bothering the Captain, the remaining two units are easy to deal with.* Angelo dodged the missiles from the Cannon-type and locked its INCOMs at the "Jesta" that lost its left arm. However, (Angelo, there's no need for you to interfere here.), a line caused him to return back to reality. (Go pursue the "Garencieres". I'll chase up immediately.)

The "Sinanju" let out this calm voice as charged at the lights of the explosion, flashing its mono-eye. Angelo realized that it was the grip of the INCOM manipulator ferrying this message through the contact loop, "Yes! Captain Full Frontal." and hurriedly answered as he reeled in the cables. *No, even if I don't interfere, the Captain can control the situation.* Angelo felt ashamed of himself for doubting his commander's power, and the "Rozen Zulu" turned away to leave the battlefield without looking back.

The INCOMs that were reeled in caught up to the accelerating machine, and attached themselves onto its hands. It seemed that the "Garencieres" had already caught sight of it, but it showed no signs of slowing down. Angelo had no intention of viewing them as allies any longer as he remained in battle mode, letting the "Rozen Zulu" race over. This ship worked with the remnants on Earth without permission from headquarters, attacked a Federation base, and disappeared without any notification for 3 days. It had already taken back the "Unicorn" and "Mineva", but did not interact with any friendly forces, but went right at "Luna II". One had to wonder, why?

He did not feel that Zinnerman would defect to the Federation, but he

knew the new coordinates indicated by the “Unicorn”—where the “Laplace Box” was, and there was a chance that he would try to keep it for himself. Besides, he was an old Principality survivor edified by the Zabi family, an old-time who would worship Mineva Zabi like a goddess. They had to make him reconsider now if he wanted to get the “Box” and stir up the Zabi faction in Neo Zeon to take down Frontal. He spotted the “Garencieres” which he could see in clear view at this distance, and let out a final thrust. It was designed as a disguised merchant ship, but it could not escape this “Rozen Zulu”. “Suberoa Zinnerman, “Garencieres”! This is Lieutenant Angelo of the escort squad!” he yelled into the communicator as he aimed the reticule of the beam rifle at the triangular prism-shaped ship.

“Slow down. We’ve already dealt with the Federation pursuers. Answer immediately.”

There was silence, and the “Garencieres” did not let out a signal at all. “If you disobey, we’ll view this as an insurrection.” He said this and aimed the lock-on red reticule at it, but the ship with the “Libacorner Delivery” showed no signs of slowing down. *Is that so?* He valued Mineva so much that Angelo was incensed by his lack of respect for Frontal since a long time ago. “I’VE WARNED YOU!” Angelo hollered as he reached the right hand of the Rozen Zulu forward.

The INCOMs shot out, and the “Rozen Zulu” extended its 3 claws as it bit into the flank of the “Garencieres”. It then reeled in the INCOMs that broke through the deck like a scythe, and closed in on the ship. It stepped on the open-air deck with its high-heels and turned its left hand to the bow of the ship, while the other INCOM was shot out, gnashing at the armor beside the bridge. The frozen air rushed out from the hole, forming a white mist. Upon seeing this, “I’ll destroy this ship! Get out now if you’re there, “Unicorn”!” Angelo yelled.

“We know from our information that you’re taken in. If you want to resist us, get out! This “Rozen Zulu” is made to defeat you.”

The “Rozen Zulu” could not fulfill its real value fighting against the Federation mass-production units. It was built with the Psycoframe of the “Sinanju” spare parts and a unique Psycoframe terminal on the back, and the machine was built with the intention of taking down the “Unicorn”. Angelo reeled in the right INCOM, let his hands attach, and latched the claws upon the ship that should have the white machine with it. The armor plates were ripped like paper, and the short-circuited sparks and crystallized air surged out. Even so, there was still no response from the “Garencieres”. Angelo felt that something was wrong, and then concluded that he was taken for a fool, “Are you

ignoring me…!?” he yelled savaged as he expanded the claws jammed into the ship until its maximum size.

“How insolent can you be!?”

The face of that arrogant “Unicorn” pilot, Banagher Links appeared on the surface of the deck where the claws were stabbed into, and Angelo increased the output of the mega-particles to the maximum. The beams pierced through to the bottom, and the “Garencieres” body jerked violently. Angelo then kicked the deck, used the momentum to move the “Rozen Zulu” towards the bow, and looked into the bridge through the window.

The hatch was still opened, and the bridge was completely empty as it was not in battle mode. The Captain’s seat, navigation seat and steering seat were all empty, and there was only weak reflected light from the very monitors on the consoles. The steering plate was set at autopilot, and though it was moving, it did not look like it adjusted its path after being knocked off course by the cannons, and the alarm inside the ship was ringing through the contact loop.

Angelo could not believe his eyes for a moment. He thought that maybe the people in the ship had evacuated, and checked all corners of the bridge on the enlarged screen. With the noisy alarm ringing, there was a female digitalized voice that was ostensibly synthesized by the computer. That monotonous and unnerving voice was making a countdown. 5, 4, 3—

The hairs on his body stood as his limbs inadvertently moved on their own; he pulled the control sticks, stepped on the pedal, and the next second after the “Rozen Zulu” left the ship, an explosion occurred from within, blowing the windows of the ship to complete smithereens as the fireball shot out, ripping through the deck as it expanded. The body of the “Rozen Zulu” was knocked away as it got hit by the impact wave; Angelo’s head and helmet hit the safety cushion with a dull sound, and he spotted the sight of the “Garencieres” scattering from the corner of his eyes.

The continuous explosions caused the deck to expand like a tumor, and the triangular-prism ship looked like a string of grapes as it broke from within. The large fireball filled his sights, and the ship that was crushed into several thousand bits of shrapnel danced with the impact as several of them were embedded into the armor plates of the “Rozen Zulu”. The continuous impact noises shook Angelo by the heart and body, and he tried to control the “Rozen Zulu” and let it escape from the torrent of shrapnel. Once he checked the status of the machine through the condition monitor, he opened the helmet visor that had

cracks on it. The beam scattered, and a pale gas remained in space as there was no sight of that unique-looking triangular-shaped ship. There were a few remaining shrapnel left of the “Garencieres”, but it had completely vanished.

“A decoy…”

He held onto the ball-shaped control grip as the voice came through his clenched teeth. They set up a self-destruct installation beforehand —no, it was most likely a system that would activate when it was attacked. Angelo’s mind could not think calmly about why they did this as he only felt a bitterness of shame. (Looks like we’ve been had) at this moment, a voice rang, and he turned around to see the red humanoid machine of the “Sinanju” approach from behind on the monitor panel that was full of noise.

“Captain…! What about those three machines!?”

(There’re always priorities. Are you hurt?)

The cold deliberate tone caused Angelo’s heart to jump. *The Captain wants to check on my safety even if he had to let the enemy units escape,* he suppressed the hot sensation that was rising in him, and wanted to turn the machine around as he said, “I’ll pursue them”; however, he was stopped by the hand of the “Sinanju”. (You’re still not used to the machine. There’s no need to force yourself.) Frontal’s voice rang as he stopped the “Rozen Zulu”.

“I’m really sorry. This machine uses your…the spare parts of the “Sinanju”, but I let it get wounded, Captain.”

(Don’t mind. The “Rozen Zulu” is at its most effective when fighting the “Unicorn”. Just get ready before that.)

“But if this is a decoy, he…”

If they were using the unmanned “Garencieres” as bait to hide their whereabouts, the chances of them being in another space region was very high. (So it looks like the report of them making contact with the Mock Wooden Horse is true.) Frontal said as the monoeye of the “Sinanju” looked towards Earth. Angelo saw the face of the mask on the face of the machine, and could not help but gulp.

(In that case, we have to consider that they went in the opposite direction, towards the Moon as we’re completely lured to “Luna II”.)

“Did that Zinnerman fall into Federation’s hands?”

(Or he may be working with them. A human’s heart is hard to grasp

after all.)

The “Sinanju” released the hand placed on the “Rozen Zulu” shoulder as it broke contact. Angelo thought that it was not really possible, but Frontal’s voice sounded like he was prepared for everything, and Angelo could only believe him as he followed the thruster unit that looked like wings.

(Return back to the “Rewloola”. We’ll continue our pursuit after that.)

“Yes! …Can we catch up?”

If it were just as Frontal concluded, the Mock Wooden Horse—the “Nahel Argama” may have pulled quite a distance to the Moon. Even if they were to turn back immediately, it would take an entire day for the main fleet, with the “Rewloola” as the flagship, to pass by Earth and reach a position where they could see. Logically, it was impossible to catch up, but Frontal seemed rather leisurely by this. (I have a plan) Angelo frowned as he looked at the “Sinanju” moving before him.

(Let’s have our sponsor help out.)

Before Angelo could ask, the “Sinanju” lit its thruster unit and accelerate. It seemed that no one could ever catch up to the Red Comet, whether it was in thought or the capabilities of the machine… *which is why there’s worth in chasing after it.* Angelo was in a near-intoxicated comfort as he subconsciously followed the back of the “Sinanju”.

Part 3[edit]

(The “Garencieres” sank.)

Captain Bright Noa’s voice came through the main screen, and upon hearing this, there were more than one sighs. After this one month of commotion, the ship that viewed as an enemy was defeated just like that—or rather, perhaps they could not accept how their hearts accepted the end of that ship so simply. “Is that so…” Otto Mitas let out air from his abdomen as he said. Liam Borrinea was standing beside her as she too sighed, folded her large arms, and stared at the Fleet Commander Bright on the screen.

Behind Liam were the new subordinates, the senior navigation officer, the engine operator in work clothes, and Mihiro Oiwakken with a tense look on her face. This originally show but a private communication for the Captain alone, but since they were at Londo Bell’s laser communicator relay satellite, this may be the last time they could contact Bright on Earth. Currently, they were completely isolated, and

there was a need for all crew members to clearly understand the current situation, so he called in all the important crew onto the bridge. He actually wanted to let the entire ship's crew hear it, but the bridge of the "Nahel Argama" was far constrained as compared to the ship, and it was impossible to fill in more than 400 people here. In fact, there was not much space left to remain in after putting in 21 of the important crew members.

(The "Carrot" and the "Tenenbaum" that went to investigate were sunk too, and it seems that they made contact with the Red Comet of the "Sleeves". I suggested to the Senate Council not to scatter our forces, but…)

Bright took the 21 stares through the screen as he continued, his expression betraying some bitterness. After the attack of Torrington, he was stuck on the "Ra Cailum" that was still immobile, but he could be said to be in the state of being replaced. The Londo Bell fleet that was activated was drafted under the direct control of the Senate Council, and he could not identify their whereabouts; in this situation, this commander practically had his limbs sliced off. Otto considered how Bright felt losing the lives of his subordinates, but at the same time, he realized that he may be next tomorrow, "Did the decoy work?" and voiced his current concern. Bright wiped his face to remove his sadness, (You can consider this to be so.) and raised his voice as a commander again.

(The Neo Zeon fleet chased after the unmanned "Garencieres" and went towards "Luna II". Even if they are to turn back, it will take 3 days for them to catch up to you. The remaining problem is—)

"How…do we avoid the sights from the Federation army.)

Once he said it out, Otto again felt the heavy reality pressing upon his shoulders. He could not wait for any resupply or support like before, but from this point onwards, the "Nahel Argama" would have to avoid the Federation army and carry out this unorthodox mission alone— Bright glanced at Otto's silent expression, immediately looked away, (That's right, but I have a plan about this) and said with a flat tone.

(Due to the attack on Dakar and Torrington Base, the Senate Council is finally starting to take action. They feel that this show of Neo Zeon firepower is far beyond the scale of mere terrorist attacks and small insurgences, and are wondering if they should view this as a 'war without declaration'.)

"In other words, they view it as a Third Neo Zeon War?)

(There's such a view appearing, starting from Senator John Bauer. If we're in a state of war, the Central Council will not be a closed room. In that sense, some of the hidden conspirators that were supporting some organizations can't act on their own secretly.)

Bright said as his lips curled into a smile. John Bauer was one of the Defense Ministry Senators who led the charge in setting up Londo Bell. He often attended the meetings of the Settlement Issues Council, and had a deep relationship with Anaheim Electronics. Though Otto did not know how much Bauer knew about this, but if Bauer were to declare that this may be a state of war in this time, there would be no doubts that Bright was the one who offered this suggestion. If Bauer and company were acting, it meant that the media would take action. The world's view will be focused on the Senate Council itself, whether it would be a parliamentary hearing or something else. With the Senate Council being transparent like glass, and the Vist Foundation and the Settlement Issues Council could not make drastic interference, and they could not secretly deal with the "Nahel Argama".

But once everything was revealed, Bright's actions of letting the "Garencieres" steal the "Unicorn" and arrange for the "Nahel Argama" to make contact with it would undoubtedly come back to bit him. "Understood, but are you sure you're alright? Fleet Commander Bright?" Otto asked, and Bright shrugged,

(I used the Zeon remnants attack to snatch you back from the Senate Council. If it's revealed, it'll be a stripping of rank at best or the firing squad at worst.)

The commander of Londo Bell made a joke of himself, but nobody could laugh. Bright looked around at everyone, who remained silent, (Everything will have to depend on what you do now.) and continued heavily,

(You have to reach the coordinates indicated by the Laplace Program and get the “Box” before everyone else. Once we can confirm that the “Box” really exists, we can send out Londo Bell in the name of maintaining peace. If it really has the power as it says, we can use it as a negotiating tool to ensure our safety.)

“Yes. The estimated time of arrival is—)

“No, you don’t have to say it. It’s better for you and your crew to know, Captain Otto.)

Otto felt a chill upon hearing Bright’s interjection. Bright was already mentally prepared to be brought in for interrogation-like investigations, and chose this action. Otto reflected on the weight of the fate pressing down on him, and inadvertently clenched the grip of the Captain’s seat. (You may hate me; I understand that I’m going overboard for asking you to do this.) Bright seemed to have noticed this as his voice echoed through the air of the bridge.

(But we have no other ways of surviving on. I hope that everyone can work together with our new crew and get the “Laplace Box” before the Foundation and the Senate Council.)

Otto felt the added burden of the term ‘new crew’, “Yes” and said as he adjusted his position. Bright took a deep breath, *If possible, I hope that I can be on your ship too.* and for a moment, his eyes seemed to say this. (I’ll leave it to you, Captain Otto.) this line showed his respect for the people older than him.

(I believe that people are beings who get reconciliation through countless trials, and to all of you who managed to survive till now, I look forward to seeing your performance.)

“Are you saying this as the ex-commander of White Base that lived on its own through the One Year War?”

(Yeah.) Bright smiled, hinting that this would be the end of their conversation. He answered back the salute from Otto, and disappeared from the screen. A wordless heaviness descended upon the bridge, and Otto got up from the Captain’s seat in a near instinctive manner.

He could not let the silence continue and increase the uneasiness within everyone. As he took the stares from everyone, he did not take the time to take a deep breath, “Everyone, it’s just like what you heard”, and broke the heavy silence with this line.

“Based on the information we got from the “Unicorn”, we shall take

action to ensure the “Laplace Box”. We’ll not be associated with the Senate Council any longer, and we may be judged to be insurgents if the Federation army finds us out.”

Everyone’s wordless face showed their inner anxiety and tension, and the 20 people in grey officer uniforms were looking back at the Captain. Otto clenched his fists that would tremble if he ever let go, and looked back at every single member in the eyes.

“Right now, the Senate Council has become a battlefield where the Vist Foundation and the Settlement Issues Council are fighting for authority. Since we’re involved with the “Box”, we may be buried in darkness no matter which side we lean towards. For us to live on in this situation, we can only take the initiative to take part in this treasure hunt that had been dragging us down. I won’t say anything cool like ‘prepare yourselves’. We have no need to die for this stupid reason, and so everyone, do not die. Remember, we shall fight on for survival, and our greatest resistance in this messy reality is to show everyone that we’re living.”

Everyone clasped their heels together and raised their hands to salute. Words alone could not salvage anything, and in this situation no one could accept nor give up, in this unreasonable situation—*nothing can begin if we don’t look forward.* Otto convinced himself as he returned the salute, and sat back on the Captain’s seat without look at anyone. “That’s all. Return to your positions, everyone.” Liam quipped, and everyone left the bridge in groups.

The 20 presences left, and the duty officers were left. With the rest gone, Otto could not help but notice Liam’s stare no matter what. *Even if it’s a state of necessity, did I say too much of my honest thoughts?* Otto suppressed the wavering in his heart as he looked up at Liam, “Captain.” Who called out. “Is there a problem?”, he asked back, and Liam walked towards the side of the Captain seat with her patented poker face.

“I’ve fallen for you.”

Once she whispered beside Otto’s ears, she showed a smile that could hardly be considered one. “I’m desperate here too.” Otto whispered back; Liam nodded, seemingly agreeing, and left the ship with a relaxed expression on his face. Otto looked around, saw that no one saw this, and sighed as he fixed his stare upon the window in front of him. He patted his face that was still blushing red even at his age, and looked at the space in the direction of the Moon.

Their current location from Earth was approximately 200,000km. There

were no signs of any ships crossing by, just a blank large space covering the “Nahel Argama”. They avoided the military’s major patrol regions and flew by relying on inertia for 3 days—the coordinates given by the Laplace Program was still 100,000km away.

Part 4[edit]

There was noise on the binary file scrolling down the display board, and it blackout suddenly. Several seconds later, the screen reverted, and once it was reinstalled with the Psycommu system, the work was done in 10 minutes or so.

“This should be alright. I never thought that such a small chip can transfer the psycommu waves out…”

Aaron Terzieff, who was working behind the linear seat, said as he handed the chip over with his fingers. Banagher Links received this chip that was no bigger than a thumb head, looked at it, and then turned his eyes to the cockpit hatch in front of him as he handed the chip over to the bearded face of Suberoa Zinnerman looking in from the opened hatch. Zinnerman pinched the chip with his thick fingers to his eyes, but those eyes seemed to be looking afar.

He seemed to be showing the bitterness of betraying his ideals, as his eyes gave a cloudy expression, not knowing where he was, and being unable to grasp situation. As Banagher looked into those eyes, “Is that the Psyco Monitor?” a clear voice rang from aside. “Yeah.” Zinnerman answered as he turned his head away. The fatigue disappeared from his face, and his expression regained its usual sharp glint. He was looking at Audrey Burne, wearing a Federation army flight jacket.

“More correctly, that’s the transmitter. I heard that it’s a kind of process embedded inside the “Unicorn” Psycommu. Since technician Aaron has already cleared through the system, I suppose there’s nothing to worry.”

Audrey wordlessly brought her face to the chip she received, and tilted her head to ponder. Once he handed the chip over, Zinnerman turned a sharp stare through the inside of the cockpit. Aaron, who was inside, seemed to be afraid as he averted his stare, probably because he saw the beast Zinnerman was raising within him. This Anaheim technician got into an unexpected incident that changed his life all because he took part in the development of the “Unicorn”, and he obviously could not catch up to the quick changes during the past three days.
Banagher left Aaron behind the linear seat as he left the cockpit of the “Unicorn”. The “Unicorn” was at a corner of the “Nahel Argama” deck; Zinnerman, Audrey, and Lieutenant Commander Conroy Haagensen

were standing at the gondola right in front of the “Unicorn” cockpit. Conroy bent his hulking figure that was no slouch as compared to Zinnerman, received the chip from Audrey, and looked amazed and suspicious.

The Psycommu transmitter—the Psyco monitor was secretly installed on the “Unicorn” when it was held captive by Neo Zeon. Whenever the NT-D activated, it would receive the shown information and send it outside. If Zinnerman had not said about it, even Banagher would not have found out, and the latter again looked at this transmitter chip. “In this case, we won’t have to worry about the Laplace Program” being eavesdropped on, right? Conroy said as he gave an affirming look. “This should be the case.” Zinnerman answered bluntly.

“Speaking of which, there’s no need to worry about being eavesdropped on if the next target is the final destination.”

This somewhat teasing tone caused the ECOAS member behind Conroy to tense up. Both he, who had the handgun on his waist, and Conroy, who took over Daguza as the commander of ECOAS, could not let down their guard against Zinnerman and his “Garencieres” crew. Banagher saw Zinnerman’s expression sharpen, met Audrey’s somewhat uncomfortable look for a moment, and interrupted both of them, “The latest information…the Neo Zeon fleet hasn’t received any information on the coordinates the “Nahel Argama” is headed to, right?” Both Zinnerman and Conroy turned their heads, making sure their eyes would not meet each other.

“I just said that the next coordinates were in space, that’s all. I don’t know whether this will be the last time, but it should be fine if the Psyco Monitor is removed. We’ll reach the “Laplace Box” before the pursuers find us.”

“Is this a Newtype’s instinct?”

Conroy, with his arms folded in front, asked. *Eh?* Banagher blinked his eyes as he was unsure of what was going on. “We’ll feel better if you say yes.” He said as he turned his wry face at Banagher.

“Anyone who heard of your exploits on Earth will wonder how you are possibly an inexperienced student. Unordinary people have their missions. Even if you don’t have any self-belief, you got to act like you have one, you have a duty to calm the people around you.”

It was a half-joking line, but to Banagher, whose heart had sank so much ever since he went down to Earth, these were heavy words. He shook off the term ‘Cyber-Newtype’ from his mind, looked at Audrey,

saw her emerald eyes that had taken countless burdens, felt the lump he could not share with her in his heart, and looked at the torso of the “Unicorn” with its cockpit cover opened. The giant with the lone horn let out a pure white glow after the dust of Earth was washed off it, and did not respond to its only pilot as it looked at the opposite wall with its emotionless face, covered by a face mask.

He looked down, and saw several mechanics surrounding the “Unicorn” mechanical manipulators, and behind them, he could see a large hand with 5 fingers. The armor was opened, showing the Psycoframe within it, and it looked like a human hand shed off its skin. “Mr Gibney!” Banagher felt a little chill as he shouted out at those mechanics.

“How is it? Is the frame defective?”

“Not at all! The armor’s all messed up, but the Psycoframe inside doesn’t have a scratch. It’s the same no matter how many times I checked.”

The mechanic officer Jonah Gibney shouted back as he checked the Psycoframe with the inspection tools. Upon hearing this expected answer, Banagher’s grip on the handrail got strong. (What’s going on?) Conroy asked as he looked at him.

“I’m not the only abnormal one; This “Unicorn” is too. It can actually pull the “Garencieres” by itself. Wouldn't the arms of any ordinary mobile suit snap?”

The shredded armor on the manipulators were the scars left from back then, the consequence of grabbing the tether wire released by the “Nahel Argama” and pulling up the “Garencieres”, which resulted in friction on the hands and melting due to overload. However—

“But the Psycoframe took no damage at all. When I was fighting against Miss Marida’s Unit 02, our Psycoframes resonated and destroyed the “Garuda”…Mr Aaron, you took part in the develop of the “Unicorn” too, right? What exactly is the Psycoframe? I heard that it’s a metal that reflects the will of the pilot, but that’s not all, right?”

Everyone suddenly turned around to look at Aaron as he appeared from the cockpit, and he felt bothered as he tried to hide away. “I did see a phenomenon that surpasses the ideas of physics…” Aaron spoke up, but another stiff voice interrupted him. “Talk later.” It was Conroy, and Banagher was surprised by his unnatural attitude, but gulped slightly as he saw Conroy’s stare that was right at Zinnerman’s group.

This was not merely the level of being wary, but an expression that clearly showed hostility. To Conroy, Zinnerman and company were still Neo Zeon soldiers, the ones who killed his commanding officer and subordinate. *This isn't it now,* Banagher wanted to speak up, but he could not as he could only look down at the floor. "I want to hear it too." However, a voice caused him to raise his head.

It was Captain Otto. He stepped onto the catwalk along the wall as he floated over to them, and he hooked his feet off the railing of the gondola before landing perfectly. He did not respond to Banagher's stare or Conroy's attempt to refute as he passed by in front of them. "Before that, there's something I want to report to you, Captain." He said as he stopped in front of Zinnerman.

"The "Garencieres" sank, right after it lured away the pursuers, as we planned."

Zinnerman's eyebrows twitched, and Audrey's expression clearly changed as she muttered, "So the "Garencieres"…". Perhaps to her, that was the ship that supported her long life as a fugitive, the ship that was like a home. As Banagher tried to recall the appearance of that ship that once went through life and death with him, "…Is that so." Zinnerman muttered, his voice entering Banagher's heart.

"As someone of the same position, I can understand the pain of you losing your ship. It's because we requested of you to offer the "Garencieres" that we can safely continue on, Captain. Allow me to thank you here."

After saying this, Otto reached his hand to Zinnerman, who hesitated before clasping the hand as he answered, "I don't dare to". The difference in affiliation was not an issue as they both knew the burden of their responsibility; the etiquette between them became a form of warmth Banagher felt in his chest, suffocating him. Haste would not get the job done, and they were making the first step. *Everyone will soon certainly get along.* He thought as he turned his inadvertently smiling face at Audrey, but the latter's face was a little gloomy as she looked at Zinnerman's expression. Once she noticed Banagher's stare, her emerald eyes looked down weakly.

After that, she did not lift her head again, but stared at a certain spot as if she was cornered. Banagher frowned and turned to Captain Otto, "Then, Mr Aaron, can you please continue?" Otto said this, but Conroy spoke up, "Captain…" seemingly wanting to stop him.

"Lieutenant Commander Conroy, I understand your feelings, but I think this "Nahel Argama" has no line between Federation and Neo Zeon

anymore. We have to let everyone know all we need to know for everyone to live on."

Conroy was overwhelmed by this forceful tone he normally would not hear, and swallowed his refute. Everyone, with Otto leading the charge, turned towards Aaron, and Banagher turned to look at him too. Aaron lowered his head, seemingly wanting to talk, but stopped as he clasped his hands in front of his chest tightly. After a short moment of silence, "Alright." He seemed to have made up his mind as he said this.

"The Psycoframe is beyond my expertise, but as I'm in charge of the armor materials department, I did hear some things regarding it. Please lend me a room with a monitor; there's something I want to show everyone."

Part 5[edit]

The large 150 inch monitor showed a small object similar to an asteroid breaking in half, creating a solemn sight of a large amount of fragments breaking. The visual was rather crude, probably due to the many reproductions, but they could still see a nuclear pulse engine nozzle built into the corner of the Asteroid and countless artificial objects built on the wall. The Earth was in the backdrop of the small asteroid, and as they had just witnessed its cerulean beforehand, it looked extremely refreshing now.

"This is the space fortress "Axis", and it used to be a base for Neo Zeon. During the Second Neo Zeon war, Field Marshall Char wanted to throw this "Axis" down to Earth to trigger what is commonly called a "Nuclear Winter", where the impact from the drop will create a large amount of dust that covers the atmosphere, cooling Earth down."

Aaron operated on the notepad terminal connected to the screen as he stood on the podium to explain. These images seemed to be part of his personal collection, something he requested of his good friend, contents of personal collection. Audrey, Zinnerman, Otto and company were seated on the chairs full of people, while Banagher was attracted by the paranormal scene on the screen. Liam and Flaste, Schole were also in this briefing room for pilot use, and the main members of the two ships were here.

"His aim is to make sure that Earth becomes an uninhabitable planet and force all Earthnoids into space, but was stopped by Londo Bell. The official report was that the "Axis" that was falling was broken from within, split in half, and the impact of the explosion caused them to deviate off course…"

The screen was filled with the blue Earth, and “Axis”, which broke in half, let out a light from one side. It was unknown if this light was that of an explosion as a luminous rainbow flash covered the large rock, leaving behind a strange impressionable light on the screen.

“In fact, the impact of a break caused one of the pieces to accelerate and fall into Earth’s orbit, so it seemed that there was no way of stopping it. But just when it was about to reach the atmosphere, “Axis” was surrounded by an inexplicable light, as you can see. And then, it left the Earth’s gravity zone while seemingly being pushed aside by this light.

This luminous light veil that had light green, red, blue and yellow in it could only be described as colourful as it swayed about. This rock that was several kilometers in diameter was wrapped in mesmerizing light as it moved slowly out of the screen. “This light’s just like that time…” Banagher spoke lightly as he sensed the surrounding anxiousness. The “Unicorn Gundam” Psycoframe let out a rainbow light as it took the weight of the “Garencieres” with its entire body. “This is called a Psycho field.” Once the commotion subsided, Aaron continued,

“During the prevention of the drop, there were mobile suits with Psycoframes fighting against each other. They were the Federation’s RX-93 and the Neo Zeon MSN-04. Both machines were lost, so the details are unspecified, but this Psycho field that changed the course of “Axis” was thought to be the result of the two machines’ Psycoframes resonating, something born out of coincidence.”

“Axis Shock…”

Audrey spoke up, and everyone looked at her. “Martha Carbine of the Vist Foundation said this.” She continued as her face ostensibly reflected the light on the screen.

“It’s a physical energy that results from the resonance of the Psycoframes and the overload of the Psycowaves. The field of light created from the two “Unicorns” is the result of this.”

“That’s correct. There’s no other way to explain this phenomenon. In other words, we can only make this level of hypothesis.”

A ring of Saturn seemed to surround the light surrounding Earth as it extended beyond the trajectory, and the image suddenly stopped. The light was lit up, and the white light shone upon everyone’s stiff expressions. Aaron took a sip from the drinking straw and continued to explain,

“At first, the Psycoframe was developed to strengthen the psycowaves.

These Psycowaves range were originally limited to around the pilot, but when different machines interact with each other, they may use the pilots as a medium to expand the range to the maximum. In this situation, the theory is that the consciousness of all the people in the field can be taken in…and some researchers tried to describe the Psycho field preventing the “Axis” drop as a collection of the thoughts of billions of humans. The united consciousness of humanity did not want Earth to be destroyed, and became a physical energy through the Psycoframe.”

Aaron lost more confidence as he spoke, and a few people were laughing awkwardly. “It’s practically a fantasy.” Zinnerman muttered as his chair let out a sound. “I feel this way too.” Aaron shrugged as he said.

“But there’s one thing certain. This incident involving “Axis” caused a huge ‘impact’ upon the military. There was no reason, no theory, but the metals used to form the spare parts of mobile suits could exert enough power to move stars.”

The air in the room that was about to warm up suddenly cooled down, and the smile disappeared from Zinnerman’s side face. “I see. This commotion is not something a nuclear weapon can raise.” Otto folded his arms again as he said grimly.

“Yes, the “Unicorn” power output increased drastically, and we can deduce that it is the result of the Psycho Field working upon the machine itself. If we can understand how to control it, it’ll become a powerful weapon humanity had never seen in its history. The military will research on it under extreme secrecy, and the experimental machine that was stolen by Neo Zeon…the “Sinanju”, was for this purpose. Luckily, there doesn’t seem to be much progress in this research. The only thing is that the relevant data obtained from the testing on the “Sinanju” was used on the UC plan.”

And the “Unicorn” was born as a result. Once he understood this, Banagher realized that he was riding on something extremely incredible, and his shoulders shuddered. “Something that can’t exist…” Liam narrowed her eyes as she muttered.

“Maybe. Some call them the Orichalcum of the Universal Century, but I would find it more appropriate to call them OO Parts. They’re like the things that looked like lightbulbs on the murals of ancient Egypt, technological things that should happen at that time, and couldn’t possibly happen. Those are things that scared future humanity 10,000 years later when they were dug up…”

Aaron pulled the long explanation to a close, ostensibly trying to hide his own embarrassment. There was a shroud of silence that descended upon the heavy atmosphere of the briefing room, not even the point of half-doubting. Banagher continued to look at the pitch black scene and reflected on that line he agreed with, “It’s something that can’t exist.” But at the same time, he imagined the aurora lights that covered Earth on the screen, and was mesmerized by it as it remained in his eyes.

It was a light that encompassed the wills of countless billion of people, and could push the stars. If this was a creation of a coincidence brought by the Psycoframes, there would be no mystery in it. *The actual fact is that miracles were created by man too, and that light’s pretty too.* Banagher thought. The light created when it resonated with Marida’s “Banshee” was terrifying, but the lift covering the “Garencieres” felt beautiful and warm. That warmth could gather the wills of the people present, and pass the warmth on the skin. In the harsh environment of space, the senses of the people, spread afar, meet with each other and resonate. This power formed the light, shaking the celestial bodies, and saved Earth as a result. There was no difference of Spacenoids or Earthnoids, Zeon or Federation, and there seemed to be a need to use a heart, isolated by space, to fill this wide space—

“…This can be one of the possibilities too.”

He mumbled subconsciously as he let out these words, causing a wordless silence. With everyone looking at him, “Isn’t this right?” Banagher stood and continued.

“I heard that the Psycommu was originally developed for Newtypes to use. Since the Psycoframe is an extension of this system, and it can accept the consciousness of humanity without limit, can everyone resonate with each other like Newtypes? At least there’s a possibility —”

“This is too far of a stretch.”

Flaste interrupted as he glanced aside at Banagher. “I don’t know how it’s like in the middle of the cockpit, but the people surrounding it did not have such self-awareness. In fact, humanity did not change after the “Axis Shock”. Earthnoids continued to pollute Earth, and the Federation army continued to be the dogs.”

These words were obviously full of spite, causing Liam, Conroy and the rest to glare over. “That’s more of a reason to give them this message, no?”

“Newtypes don’t have the specs of humans, or rather, I think it’s something like hope. As long as we consider that humanity still has such possibilities, there’s no need to keep watching us sink into despair, right? If the Psycoframe was created out of coincidence, it’s definitely built to from the wills of the people chasing these possibilities. As long as we keep viewing the current situation as reality, there’s no meaning in living on. Humanity should keep chasing possibilities to enter and exit space like this…”

I’m not being clear in my explanation here— he thought as he fumbled with his words, and the passion in his heart got drenched. At this moment, “This is a religion now.” A certain voice rang, causing a few people to let out awkward laughs. “It’s possible to understand if it’s a story…” “Once we’re older, such topics are…” some people continued, and Otto looked away disinterestedly, while Zinnerman exhaled and lowered his head. *We feel an invisible thing together, even if it’s vague, and before we can confirm it with words, we’ll break away from the true nature of it, and understand our hearts that are opened to each other.* “This isn’t it…!” Banagher felt extremely restless as he raised his empty voice, but a voice interrupted, “I agree with Banagher.” Causing him to hold his breath.

“They fed it, not with grain nor chaff, but fortified and nourished it solely with the notion that it might yet come to pass…this was one of the verses of the poem exalting Unicorns written by one of the old poets. It’s a being that’s born of trust and raised, and this might be what Banagher is saying by the possibility of humanity.”

Audrey’s slender body stood up as she gave him a little smile. Banagher however was at a momentous loss of words as he looked back at her face in a half blank manner.

“Humanity can change, and it has a soft heart that can take this change. If not for this, I won’t have a chance to talk with everyone like this. We were still opposing camps trying to kill each other not too long ago.”

These stimulating words caused everyone present to feel uncomfortable and look away from Audrey. “And we can end up like this due to the efforts from everyone.” Audrey said as she looked around at the members of both the Federation and Neo Zeon.

“I won’t say that we can control the Psycoframe if we can use this power properly…this thinking will only degrade this into a talk about efficiency. However, we can get along. As long as we don’t forget this and foster our relationships, I suppose the “Unicorn Gundam” will use its Psycoframe…the power of people chasing possibilities to protect us.”

Audrey’s words ended off with a prayer, and she went quiet. Everyone recalled the words that were echoing in their minds, digested on it, and the silence in this quiet room intensified. Banagher too was no exception. Mineva was the Princess that inherited the name of the Zabi family, a name that was unrelated to him, and this girl’s clear words shook his heart deeply. As he felt proud by her adamant position, he felt the lump of weight in his heart become heavier.

If this machine has such power, its existence will signify the gathering of the people here, and don’t I have no right to pilot this “Unicorn” now? I need to know what kind of person this me who fought till now is. This thought slowly floated up from the bottom of this silence.

Part 6[edit]

The scene caused him to have a sense of déjà vu. There was the regular ringing of the ECG and the antiseptic smell that was stronger than the infirmary linked to it. The drip used for low gravity use continued to let its transparent liquid flow, transporting the minimum amount of nutrients through the tube into the left arm attached. The oxygen mask was removed, but Marida Cruz still showed no signs of recovering. Her bandaged body laid down upon the bed, and her face was peeled slightly due to the burns as it faced the white ceiling.

This intensive care room was no different from the time when he was sent here, except that there was a flower placed on the table beside the pillow. Banagher looked at this radiant Yellow Carnation, and found that it was not artificial; if it was not kept within the freeze-dry supplies on the ship, someone would have raised it secretly. “Ensign Mihiro brought it over.” Doctor Hasan continued to focus on writing the medical records as he said without looking up.

“Miss Mihiro…”

Banagher thought of the stiff expression Ensign Mihiro showed when she insisted on strapping Marida in the straitjacket. “So Ensign Riddhe is still alive.” Hasan did not stop writing as he said emotionlessly.

“But even so, we can’t do anything. Everyone’s trying to accept this reality bit by this.”

After that, he gave Banagher a profound look, and joked, “Are Newtypes infectious?” Banagher felt his expression tense up, “How’s she?” he asked as he looked away.

“There are some burn wounds, and her external injuries are severe. I’ve done all I can, but it’ll take some time for her to recover. She’s a Cyber-Newtype, but she’s not superhuman after all.”

“Then…what about her inner heart?”

Banagher could not find any other ways to express himself as he spoke with a vague tone. Ple Twelve forgot her name as Marida and went mad as an embodiment of destruction; it was impossible to tell which state she was when she was asleep. “That’s beyond my expertise, and I can’t specify clearly here.” Hasan frowned as he answered.

“According to what Captain Zinnerman said, everything was normal before she lost consciousness…but with her current situation, it’s a very subjective thing to tell whether she’s normal or not. One can consider that she may be suppressing her inner self, and the readjustments showed her broken wish. She probably doesn’t know

which state she's in now."

Her master's hope is her hope, her master's enemy is someone she has to battle— she knew that she could only maintain her state of mind, and she thought that it would be right if she were to keep her relationship of reliance with Zinnerman. She laid a curse upon herself, and Banagher used these words upon himself as he clenched his fist, took a deep breath, and lifted his head.

He came to the infirmary after leaving the briefing room, not just to visit Marida. "She's not the only one. Everyone has their own doubts." Hasan intended to turn away and leave as he said, "Doctor", but Banagher called him with realization in his mind, and said the following words,

"Can humans erase their own memories on their own?"

"Well…if there's a severe psychological trauma, this self-defense mechanism will kick in. It may be a subconscious suppression of memories."

"Then, is it possible to be dominated by the memories that should have disappeared, and make us lose ourselves?"

He felt that he was squeezing out this voice that made Hasan frown in surprise. The unknown memories throbbing between his temples became one with him, a foreign language that could not be distinguished—"I want you to do a checkup on me." Banagher said to Hasan as he looked at the latter in the eyes.

"I want to see if I'm like a Cyber-Newtype, if my memories were manipulated, whether I have a modified body."

"What is it, out of a sudden…"

"I want to be sure whether the one speaking here is the real me. Is it possible that someone designed me to fight on like a Newtype?"

He could hear Alberto's ominous voice, and Marida's murmuring, *Perhaps you're the same kind as me.* No matter the truth however, he could not look away. If the Psycommu could gather the consciousness of humanity, if the "Unicorn" could convert it into power, there would be a need to be clear about the soul at the core of it. If the soul was restrained by other people's thoughts, it would not be able to face the "Unicorn". Hasan was shaken by the pressure as he backtracked, and Banagher pressed on, grabbing him by the torso of his white cloak. "You've already done a test to determine Cyber-Newtypes, right? Do it again—" he spoke, but was interrupted by

another voice, “You’re yourself.” And this shocked Banagher.

“Even if you’re controlled by someone else, what you’ve done up till now won’t be hidden, and your existence won’t be denied. Isn’t this good enough?”

The curtain was pulled aside slightly, and the man got up from the bed beside him, showing a sharp expression. Banagher looked back at the fierce-looking bald man, and before he could understand what the latter was saying, Hasan hurried to him, saying, “Mr Gael, you’re on a drip, but I never permitted you to leave the bed.” Banagher looked at this tall man in pajamas, and those there were other members who were in treatment, Banagher never paid much attention to them. The man did not look away as he refused Hasan’s kind intention to lift him up. “I’m Gael Chan.” He reached his burly hand out as he said this.

“I’m really sorry for not greeting you formally. I’m being watched tightly by the doctor after all.”

Banagher was attracted by the gentle expression, and he too reached his hand out. It was a hard yet warm hand, and Banagher felt that he heard this voice before…after searching through his memories, he remembered the words he heard through the contact loop, and this shocked him as he looked at the man. This was the voice he heard when he clashed blades with an attacking enemy while investigating the remains of the Prime Minister residence “Laplace”. (You have to find the real identity of the “Box” and find a better way to use it.) (You must continue to live on and carry on the will of your father)—

“That time…!”

Banagher had forgotten all about it, and Gael, upon seeing the former retract his hand and backtracked, “That was rude of me at that time.” Gael lowered his head politely as he said this.

“I tried to take revenge for my master and got onto this ship with the help of Zinnerman…but as you can see, I’m still in a lackluster position here.”

“You…know my father?”

After he asked instinctively, Banagher shut up upon noticing Hasan’s presence. The latter looked at both parties with probing eyes, tapped himself on the shoulder with the records, “Don’t talk for too long.” He said as he turned away, wanting to leave, but before the white cloak left through the partition of the curtain, a clear voice rang, “No, doctor, please stay.” Banagher turned to look at Gael’s face doubtfully.

“Now that things ended up like this, there’s a need for the people on this ship to know the truth…is it alright?”

The last words were directed at Banagher, a request for him to be prepared. However, Banagher did not have any objective, as he wanted to be certain of everything because he felt that his body was not meant to serve himself only. His back was facing Hasan, who stopped and turned back to look, and nodded. “You’re truly alike.” Gael’s expression showed a gentle expression as his lips showed a smile, saying.

“The man who’s worthy of being entrusted with the “Box”…the bluebird the Vist Family searched for a long time. To think that it was amongst their own relatives.”

His black eyes were shaking as he harbored the relief no external party would know of. Banagher held his breath as he faced this bald Gael who knew the truth.

Part 7[edit]

After moving through the stationary satellite, he could recognize the gravity acting upon his machine. As he let gravity pull him down, he continued with the 4 hours of inertial flight, and spotted, the destination ship.

“It’s huge…”

Nigel said subconsciously as he looked at the ship that was on the largest telescopic visual. As there was no interference of air, it was hard to grasp the concept of distance in vacuum, but they could imagine the scale of the opening to the dock and the mobile suit launch exit. He could tell that this was beyond the ordinary specifications from the mysterious shape shown with Earth as the background. (Is that the new flagship for the Earth orbital fleet?) (There’s no way the “Ra Cailum” can compare to that.) upon hearing the voices from Watts and Daryl, Nigel stepped on the pedal light. The “Jesta”, which lost an arm, used up its remaining thruster flare, accelerated a little, brightening the details of the large ship on the window.

It was the Dogosse Giar-class battleship “General Revil”, with a length of more than 600m and a maximum width of 20m; it could be considered the largest battleship in the history of the Federation space fleet. The hull with constructed with a giant elevated bridge and 4 modules, each functioning as a mobile suit dock. On first glance, it looked like a double-ship, but the connected blocks of the ship were

shocking large, to a point where one could not find the weakness of a join. The mega-particle cannons were scattered like a hill of swords, and it looked like a lumbering shadow, like a human sitting with its legs stretched from afar. However, that leg itself had the mass of a Salamis-class, which made this Dogosse Giar-class a frightening large figure.

The ship could contain 4 fleets of mobile suits, and there were more than 1,500 active personnel. After the war, there were plans to build 4 of this Dogosse Giar-class, ostensibly the embodiment of massive firepower on a ship, but the remaining constructions were suspended when the first ship under the same name was sunk. One of the reasons, as pointed out, was that even if they were to consider the current need to assemble as many mobile suit fighting forces as possible, it would be extremely dangerous to over-concentrate their fighting strength in one ship. Another reason was that the current military objective was counter-terrorism, and people felt that a large ship had no chance of deploying. However, there was another thought that went against the grain of effectiveness, ‘symbolism’, ‘might’; this allowed the Dogosse Giar-class to see the light of day again. As part of the Universal Century 0100 plan, the Zeon Republic would dissolve, and the space army would be realigned—and in the rebuild of the Earth’ orbital fleet, this Dogosse Giar-class ship was deemed the most suitable ship to be the flagship of the fleet.

Thus, the second ship “General Revil” underwent construction, and after 2 years, it was in the official testing stage. It had not entered space formally, and the ship’s loading was incomplete, but the bridge construct which resembled a city brought about a pressure beyond words. The Nigel, who was piloting the “Jesta” that looked like a resident of Lilliput in comparison, closed his relative distance to that of the “General Revil”, while Daryl, Watts, and the remaining survivors of the Tenenbaum fleet followed behind on the base jabbers. The landing deck received the group that had not eaten for a day as they flew with the scars of battle, its indication lights lit up to form a glowing path.

(The ship’s 80% fitted, right?)

Daryl let out a probing voice as he looked at the opening between the command zones. It seemed that as they were finally relieved to be able to land safely, Daryl was not happy by how this ship seemed to be bluffing about its might. Nigel turned his guide beacon over and said,

“I heard that the Vist Foundation sponsored it and pulled it out of official testing. I guess the spare supplies of the “Jestas” are here too…”

After losing their motherships, Londo Bell commanded its subordinates to meet up with the “General Revil”, and that was the only thing they were told. It seemed that the Vist Foundation changed the flagship through the Senate Council in their quest to get back the “Unicorn”. It was impossible for the Londo Bell members, on the outside ranks, to get along nicely with the mainstream Earth orbital fleet, but even without this point, this trip did not look like it was going to be easy. Nigel sighed as he looked at his unit that had its left arm severed by the enemy machine. He hoped to at least repair it, and muttered to himself in his heavy heart. *I’m going to take revenge on that machine that showed me the fear of death for the first time, that Red Comet—*

(Whatever, I just want to get a good rest.)

Watts’ muttering echoed through the wireless communicator, blowing aside the bitterness in his heart. He shook his head and looked at the “Jesta Cannon” following behind him.

(I don’t want to be a homeless kid now. Ever since we got tangled with that “Unicorn”, we hardly—)

Suddenly, an approaching alarm rang, interrupting the words from before. Nigel instinctively grabbed onto the control stick, got his beam rifle into firing mode, and looked at the thruster light approaching from behind. It got larger and larger as he looked on, and once it showed itself to be a humanoid mobile suit, joined their ranks moving in the same trajectory. (What the!?) Watts’ voice was overpowered by the machine, letting out a trail of thruster lights as they flew by above Nigel, and there was a storm-like thruster pressure rained down upon the 3 “Jestas”.

The black machine ignored its allied that broke ranks as it hurriedly stopped, and flew to their path. Nigel was the first to reposition himself, and gasped as he saw that machine descend towards the ship deck. This black machine that was one with space had an inorganic-looking face covered by a facemask. However, the golden crown was of stark contrast to the machine that was not decorated in any ways, and brought about an ominous impression—

“The “Banshee”…!?”

The “Banshee” turned its head over, ostensibly in response to the call, and showed the light from the gaps of the eyes. (Are you kidding me…!?) (Wasn’t it sunk together with the “Garuda”!?) Watts and Daryl called out respectively, and Nigel looked at the “Banshee”, which showed its agility the “Jestas” could not match, lighting its thrusters little by little as it landed onto the deck. There was a familiar presence

that suddenly shot out from the back. *It's someone I know,* this instinct flashed through his mind.

It's the Cyber-Newtype I went past in the "Ra Cailum"…no, It's more familiar. It's someone with a stronger living presence. This pilot is—

Part 8[edit]

After passing through the automatic door, he saw a bridge that was much larger than any ship he had seen before. The number of active personnel here was not that much different from the "Nahel Argama", but the height and length was 5 times longer; most importantly, the ceiling was very high. Alberto Vist looked up at the ceiling 2 levels high, filled with screens, turned to look at the large window made of absurdly hardly plastic, and made his two subordinates wait at the door as he stepped on the floor and moved forward. Captain Maseki Danbaev stood up from his Captain seat to greet the other man.

Alberto however ignored the outstretched hand as he grabbed the back of the commander seat. He got onto the seat in the same motion as when he was on the "Nahel Argama", "How's the collection of the Tri-Stars." and asked without looking back. "It's done." Captain Maseki answered. "Then, please prepare for launch." He said briefly, and reached his hand for the microphone on the console. Before the Captain could answer him, he pressed the call button and brought his mouth to the microphone. (To all forces on the "General Revil, I'm the inspector for this operation, Alberto Vist of Anaheim Electronics." He started with the speech he prepared beforehand.

"As notified yesterday, this ship shall cease testing immediately, and will execute a real mission as a direct operative of the Senate Council. We're to search for the Londo Bell ship "Nahel Argama" and secure the new mobile suit that's now on it. The "Nahel Argama" is suspected to be working with the "Sleeves", the Neo Zeon remnants, and have disappeared for more than 3 days. It is possible that they had made contact with the Neo Zeon fleet, and also, it's very possible for us to enter combat upon meeting each other. If there're still people thinking that this is just a easy and simple search operation, I hope that you will change your mood now."

The officer, probably a First Officer, turned his back against the bridge crew that had their eyes widened, and glared at Alberto with killing intent. *How can you make this decision on your own!?* He looked like he wanted to charge forward and protest loudly, but Captain Maseki stopped him, shaking his head to tell the other man to forget about it. It was strange for a civilian inspector to announce publicly like this, and he knew that it was shameful of him to ignore this as a Captain, but he

could not be bothered in doing so. He was a man who merely put his life as priority and won this ancient-era ship as a result. Alberto ignored the captain showing the expression of shame and tolerance as he continued,

“The current situation is complicated, and we cannot expect any allied ship’s reinforcements in this operation. This secret operation will have to be carried out by this ship alone. This mission really is unfitting of the name of the hero that led us to victory in the One Year War, but the situation is critical. The new mobile suit on the “Nahel Argama” is one of the pillars in the realignment of the space army plan, a product of the “UC Plan”. If Neo Zeon takes it away, this realignment will be subjected to a setback. As the flagship of the proud Earth orbital fleet, this ship displays the might of the Federation, and this ship has to prevent any breaks from the realignment. I believe everyone had heard of the recent spate of Neo Zeon terrorist attacks, especially the news of the many civilian casualties in Dakar. The Federation army now has to be reborn and get stronger to prevent the same things from happening again. We shall hunt down the dissidents, eradicate Neo Zeon, and stabilize the Universal Century that’s approaching its 100 year anniversary. This is the mission granted to this ship, the mandate. Do remember that this operation will decide the fate of the Federation, and I hope everyone can perform better. That’s all.”

Alberto cut the mic and put it back onto the console. As everyone was silent due to being dumbstruck, Captain Maseki applauded loudly, and the First Officer and company could only clap unwilling. Alberto did not look at anyone as he left the Commander’s Seat and let his body float to the exit of the bridge. This unpassionate clapping soon ended, and the Captain’s command echoed hollowly, “All hands, prepare for launch.”

Part 9[edit]

(I heard you made a brilliant speech.)

30 minutes later, he was in the communication room where the crew was forbidden to enter. Martha Vist Carbine spoke on the monitor, “Yes.” And Alberto answered without an expression.

(So you got stronger after nearly dying? As expected, men will only buck up when they go to war.)

The eyes filled with a chilling light pierced into his heart as her bright lips showed a smile. He could not look back at this expression at all, and lowered his head, pretending to scratch his nose. “How’s the situation there?” he asked.

After escaping from the “Garuda”, Martha stayed at the Matsushiro Base in the Far East. It did not seem too far away from the Central Government, a place easy for her to keep her eyes on them. (Anyway, Captain Bright’s removal is certain.) Martha answered as she reclined back on the chair, and the expression on her face had the flair of enjoyment over the madness through the past few days.

(There’s no doubt that he helped the “Nahel Argama” escape. Once the emergency repairs of the “Ra Cailum” are complete, it looks like he’ll be sent to the Senate Council.)

“Can’t we catch him and question him?”

(We can’t. Senator Bauer of the Defense Branch and a few others are watching over him, and after so many troubles, the Senate Headquarters can’t move. It took me a lot of effort just to deploy that one “General Revil”. Also, even if we can ask Captain Bright, do you think he’ll know where the “Nahel Argama” is?)

Don’t know what you don’t need to know. Captain Bright had been interacting with the vague presence of the higher ups in the military, and he obviously was not a foolish person. (It’s just a matter of time. The “Nahel Argama” is somewhere between the Moon and Earth. Once the entire army carries out the search, there’ll be information.) Martha showed a slightly anxious expression as she took a sip of red tea, and continued,

(There’s nothing big going on now, but Ronan Marcenas will definitely think of something. Your mission is to get back the ”Unicorn” and get the “Box” before they do. I’m counting on you, you know?)

She narrowed her eyes and showed a probing gaze again. She wanted to see what happened to Alberto, who was abandoned on the “Garuda”, and what kind of mental change it brought to him, and her expression was pointed at his throat, preventing him from moving. Alberto realized that he had changed, that he had a motive different from before. “…Yes.” Alberto pretended to remain calm as he answered, but Martha did not look away as their eyes met, and showed a sadistic smile. (Speaking of which, how’s the new sample?) she changed the topic.

(I heard that it’s an adult male. Has he boarded the “Banshee”?)

“Extremely good. Unlike Ple Twelve, he’s an enhanced human with adjustments later on, but his emotions are stable, and his compatibility with the “Banshee” is good.”

He clenched the fists on his knees as he kept himself from faltering

due to this sudden attack. Martha looked as if she could see the tension on his skin, and answered, (It seemed that President Bentner had died.) At this point, he could not stand the pressure as he averted his gaze.

(I didn't know the Augusta Research Institute has such a hidden ace, but in that case, I can relax now.)

"Relax…?"

(I won't have to worry about you being bewitched by a young woman, making the wrong decision, and I also won't have to get jealous. I nearly cried when I thought I lost you while leaving the "Garuda".)

His heart jolted as a result of his body being 'raised' for 20 years. Even though he knew that this was a lie, his heart still felt hot, and his body lost strength. He felt that he really was useless, lowered his head and gritted his teeth. Martha heaved out a sigh and crossed her speckles and smooth legs. (I'm concerned with Ronan's movements too, and I'll remain on Earth for the time being.) she said with a relaxed smile.

(Once everything is over, let's go to the Mediterranean for vacation. I await your good news.)

The visual stopped before he could answer, and the communication room was shrouded in darkness. Alberto leaned his arm on the console and took a deep sigh. He examined the mix of shame and delight within him conflicting with each other, and let his body sink within the darkness. Soon after, that darkness moved, and showed the presence of the other person in the room.

He wiped away his drenched face, he turned on the lights. With the artificial lights shining on his back, he clasped his hands, "Isn't it funny?" and muttered with his eyes looking down.

"The woman married to Anaheim trained the firstborn of her own family into her dog. This is the true reality of the family affairs in the Vist Foundation."

He lifted his head and looked behind. Riddhe Marcenas was leaning at the door beside the wall, not answering at all. He, dressed in the pilot suit of the "Banshee", folded his arms unhappily, and once their eyes met, he turned away disinterestedly. "I gave my aunt false information." Alberto got up from his chair and continued with a business-like voice.

“It’s a sample data that’s similar to your body size, Ensign. I don’t think it’ll be seen through easily, but don’t appear easily. There may be people involved with aunt’s dealings I don’t know of here. If anyone knows that the pilot is a member of the Marcenas family, there may be quite a commotion.”

It was troublesome because the speech he prepared in the ship reached Martha’s ears. He stepped off the floor and let his body float towards the door, “Why?” but a question caused him to turn his head slightly. Riddhe looked back with a hideous expression as his body remained unmoved as he folded his arms.

“Why did you betray your aunt and let me board this ship?”

“I didn’t betray her. The “Banshee” needs a pilot. It’s not often that we have a pilot who’ll give up his life to pilot a Psyco machine.

Riddhe’s eyebrows twitched as he muttered, “I’ll pilot it, you see.” Ever since they left the “Garuda”, his face became hideous, and it seemed to grow darker as the days passed. “And I want some insurance too.” Alberto looked away and spoke with a deliberate cold voice.

“Leaving aside the people on the “Nahel Argama”, even we don’t know what’s inside the “Box”. In this sense, it will be beneficial to have you since you seem to know what’s inside it, Ensign, just in case.”

“So you realized?”

Riddhe said as his eyes moved. He revealed some things on the “Garuda”, the history of the “Box” that started with the terrorist attack on the Prime Minister Residence “Laplace”. “Yeah.” Alberto answered.

“The problem is, what is recorded on it.”

Riddhe averted his eyes that met Alberto’s as he let out a vague voice, saying, “…It’s a curse.” His back left the wall he was leaning on, and he picked up the helmet floating in the air. He exerted strength on his shoulders, seemingly wanting to crush this helmet, and Alberto looked at his trembling profile.

“But these aren’t important. I came here with you just to beat the “Unicorn”. You can make use of me however you want, but I won’t hold back just because it’s the key to the “Box”; you better remember this.”

“No problems. You can’t beat the “Unicorn” without this realization. In the worst situation, aunt will accept it if we can prevent the “Box” from being revealed.”

This isn’t a lie. If he can avoid thinking of unnecessary things and make himself compatible with the “Banshee”, that’ll be best. This was why he revealed his conversation with Martha. “We want to get different things.” After leaving these words, he left the communication room, and the door closed, covering Riddhe’s back, leaving a dull sound that echoed through the corridor.

Part 10[edit]

The man shown on the monitor looked around 40 years old, was used to being the focal point of attention, and was familiar that he looked charismatic. To a handsome looking man like him similar to that of an actor, this was not uncommon for a role like his. But he was able to act like this so reasonably and yet brazenly, like he was facing a mirror, and this aspect could not be explained simply by his background and upbringing. Perhaps it was the unique characteristic this man had.

(I understand the situation, but it’s tough for me too. The Republic’s army is limited in movement. We need to gain the approval of the Federation if we want to move out of our own range.)

Monaghan Bakharov, 44 years old, the eldest son of the Ex-prime minister of the Zeon Republic who occupied the position for a long

time, Darcia Bakharov, and the current defense minister. On the surface, it seemed that he followed his father's footsteps and pushed for the policy the Federation pursued, but he was secretly a rightist gathering the dissolved parties of the Republic, and the one stoking the revival of Zeonism. To Neo Zeon, he was a sponsor who had been supporting the Neo Zeon army quietly…but to Angelo, this man was someone he did not like.

He used his background of the 3rd generation of a political family as a selling point, and used his nice looking mask to gain the support of the people. It was still bearable to see that he, who was assigned to the space fortress "A Baoa Qu", viewed himself to be a war veteran all because he experienced the feeling of defeat deep within the fortress. What was most unbearable however was his overly perfect self-act. He always made others see himself as the center of the attention, and act according to what the other party wanted him to be, but never put others in his eyes. If he were not a truly arrogant person, it would be hard to see him as something else.

There are often people like this amongst the 'guests'. Angelo thought of this, and he clenched his fist due to unhappiness. He deliberately moved away to avoid being seen on the camera, and looked down at the lush blond hairs standing in front of him. "There should be a fleet training far away." Full Frontal remained unmoved in the face of Monaghan as he spoke with a clear voice.

"You're the Ambitious Defense Minister Monaghan. I suppose there are patriots amongst the defense fleet undergoing training under you, right?"

Frontal said as his masked face showed the reflected light from the monitor, and his lips twist with a smile. Frontal's office was decorated like a VIP room, located in a corner of the "Rewloola", and over here, only the owner of the room and Angelo were present. Monaghan narrowed his eyes a little, (I should say that you've checked me here.) he answered, but his voice remained steady as if he was reading a script.

(I certainly do have the means to operate this, but it's not going to be fun bringing the Republic to the surface now. The recent commotions have made Zeon rather noticeable, though I do hope that the "Sleeves" can react better…)

"The incidents on Earth were caused by radicals on Earth, not planned by us Neo Zeon."

(But the world doesn't think this way. The Federation Council wants to

use this chance to stoke the operations to eliminate Zeon, saying that this is the start of the third Neo Zeon War. Some people also insisted on investigating the republic—)

“And I heard that you still can’t grasp the whereabouts of the “Nahel Argama” even through that meeting. It’ll take time for our main fleet to move to the Moon, and even if we have to use the ships hidden in Side 6, we need even the tiniest clue we can get. In this case, the Republic forces surrounding the Moon have a better chance of searching through the area than the Federation.”

Monaghan was questioned by this cold voice endlessly, and his expression faltered as he was at a loss of words. Angelo’s lips curled up, thinking to himself that there was such a vast difference between those two. Monaghan’s self-directed script was at a level of a politician, but Frontal hoped to be the vessel for the will of all Spacenoids and turned his role into this. At this moment, Frontal again put on his mask ‘again’, deciding to act out this role thoroughly. There was no way a vulgar man like Monaghan could compare to him.

Just continue on with that baseless Nationalist speech that has nothing in it. The day of Frontal’s rise will come, and this man is destined to be the king for the abandoned Spacenoids, burning all injustice and bringing us to a pure world without stain. That day to rise will come— Angelo forgot about his reality as he was intoxicated in that awaited moment he imagined. (I understand.) Monaghan’s voice seemed so distant.

(But since it’s a mean we can only do under the tables, there’s still a limit to how much we can do.)

“It’s fine. As long as we know where the “Nahel Argama” is headed to, the escort squad and I will leave from the “Rewloola” first.”

(I’ll leave it to you. The current Republic army can’t take a real battle, whether it’s the equipment or the manpower. They’re unlike the “Sleeves” now.)

“And the one who granted the “Sleeves” this power is you, Defense Minister Monaghan Bakharov.”

To add on, Monaghan Bakharov was also the one who accepted Cardeas Vist’s proposal and allowed the deal of the “Laplace Box”. He forgot his act and showed a speechless expression before disappearing from the monitor, and Frontal stood up without showing signs of letting down his guard,

“It’s just like what you heard. Install boosters on the shackles, and get

ready for a long distance raid. It's about time to launch."

The order became a jolt that shocked through Angelo's before, and he answered, "Yes…!" Frontal kicked the floor and leaned his body to the window on the wall.

"But are they reliable? They lost all guts because of the clauses in the defeat, and the Republic army doesn't seem like one now. If we're to rely on guys who don't know how to fight for real, who only know how to yap about Nationalism—"

"It's possible. As long as we align our pieces, the "Nahel Argama" will report its position.

Angelo did not understand these words as he looked at the back of the bright red uniform. Frontal looked at the window, and his masked face looked into the vacuum, with no intention of looking back.

"A human heart is really hard to grasp…but hatred won't vanish that easily."

He looked at the darkness no ordinary person could peer into, and his back looked frozen as he looked into space. Angelo looked at the rose on the desk, clenched the fist that felt sensation of pain before, and left the office without a doubt.

There was no need for reason or explanation. He could die anytime for this person. With this new realization, Angelo floated his burning body to the corridor.

Part 11[edit]

"I guess this is the feeling when someone you know becomes a star."

Takuya Irei said as his feet hooked onto the handrail and used his hands to cup his head. He was wearing a mechanic's overalls, and his appearance of being thoroughly stained by grease resembled his old self as an apprentice in Anaheim. "Maybe." Micott Bartsch answered, and Banagher felt time had reversed as he looked at them, the same 'disjointed' school life he lived through every day. He regurgitated on the memory of "Industrial 7", which was ostensibly his former life, and felt the feeling that maybe everything was a nightmare, "Don't say that." He answered bitterly.

"But I'm me, right Haro?"

Banagher said to the toy robot that size of a basketball, and it answered energetically (Haro!) as it flapped its two ear-like discs. Before Banagher went down to Earth, this exhibition room was the last

place where the trio met, and they were the only ones inside. They had their own things to do, and now, this was the best place to recap through the torrid events. This was the first time Banagher could relax like this ever since he was detained in the “Nahel Argama”.

Takuya was assigned to the mobile suit branch as a mechanic, while Micott was sent to the healthcare department; they were under apprenticeship, but also had to carry out shifts. They said this was better than not doing anything, and volunteered to do something; but the reason why they could get jobs was because the “Nahel Argama” had a shortage of labor due to the continuous battles. Either way, they were dressed in Federation work clothes, and looked somewhat more mature as even their faces looked as if they had grown up, resulting in Banagher feeling that he was abandoned somewhat. But to them, it seemed that Banagher was an existence that was far away.

“But you’re actually a prince of the Vist Foundation, right? Let alone being the pilot of the “Unicorn”; isn’t that too much of a coincidence.”

It was normal of Takuya to say this. With Banagher’s agreement, the things Gael Chan mentioned reached the ears of everyone on the ship, and now Takuya and Micott knew of his heritage. The term prince did not seem right to Banagher, but he did not want to correct it further as it would be better than having them worry too much and not dare to say anything. Perhaps this outlandish remark was the biggest consideration he could say. “Yeah, I guess the reason why you’re so popular is because you have that princely charm, Banagher.” Micott glanced at him as she said this, and Banagher was further convicted of their consideration.

“Really? I never felt that way. I thought that he’s just a blue-collar worker who’s dazing around every day.”

“That’s why men are really slow-witted. You’re admired by a group of people too, Takuya; you do have the flair as a vassal.”

“A vassal!? I’ve become a vassal!? It’s really depressing to hear it…”

The duo started to bicker again, but they were probably not bickering for the sake of Banagher, but for themselves. They needed this action to digest the current reality in front of their eyes and absorb it. As Banagher thought about this, he felt a little suspicious that he could observe others in this way, and looked at space through the large window.

The stars afar gave off light that could only reach them after several thousand years of travel. Everything began on that day, the moment

he saw the “Unicorn” gliding through space. After that, a lot of things happened, he got involved with a lot of people, and he changed. It will still take some time before he could bear the ‘responsibility’ Gael said of, and his power alone was not enough, but one of these days, he would have to face those things; what he wanted most at this point was power to shoulder the burden. Even if everything that was preplanned happened, the decision he made for every instance, every step he took till this point was of his own will, and not of others. The words of others pulsating in his temples, the scenarios he had been through, and the relationships he had with others formed the current him now.

Now, all he could only think of was probably to use the conversation with Gael as new flesh and blood to form a brand new self that was different from yesterday. He lowered his stare and looked at Haro in his hands. This was the only gift his father Cardeas gave him, and even though Banagher and his mother escaped from the Vist family, he found them, but did not come forth. Cardeas stood on the throne of the Vist Foundation, wanting to change despite the hostility within and outside, and was ostensibly careful not to let mother and son get involved in the politics. Even Gael, who had been working down Banagher’s father for a long time, did not know anything about Banagher, and it was only after Cardeas’ death that he knew of their relatiomnship.

“He’s a gentle person, and he knows that one needs conviction and rigor to exert this gentleness. His rigor made him look like a cold and ruthless dictator, but that was the view of a person who did not know the meaning of gentleness. That’s because people nowadays use the gentleness of irresponsibility to escape from reality.”

However, this Cardeas wanted to hand the “Box” over to Neo Zeon, starting off a chain of battles and chaos till this point. The Foundation and Anaheim were the same in that their gears were established through war, allowing them to continue operating. This was what Banagher heard from Cardeas himself; instead of calling it a revolution, would it not be the idea of a warmonger hoping to reap economic profits?

He noticed Gael’s expression, as the latter still need rest after the bullet to his abdomen, but Banagher did not hold back with this line alone as he questioned. If this were the case, this would be unforgivable. He would think of denying everything, including the relic called the “Unicorn” and the blood of Cardeas within him.

“I think there were appropriate plans made to counter the rebellious

forces in the Foundation. Destruction alone won't complete the change. Even if we have to go against our ideals, we have to consider countermeasures to let all existing systems have a soft landing. This is a rule the adult society have when they want to start something…I suppose it can be said to be responsibility."

The term was unexpected, yet expected in a certain way; the term 'responsibility' had been restraining people, removing their ability to speak up, and was sometimes detested. However, if they do not bear that weight, they would merely become a powerless bystander in this world—and with this abstracted experience of reality, Banagher accepted what Gael said.

"In this incident, the one actively destroying rules was Martha Carbine. She knew of Master Cardeas' plan and incited the people around her so that she could become the leader of the Foundation. With the righteous sounding theme of protecting their own interests, she instigated the involvement of the Federation and Mr. Alberto…in a sense completely different from Master Cardeas, Martha is also a binding cause of the Vist bloodline…an embodiment of the negative history. Restrained by the curse of the "Laplace Box", relatives continued to fight without ceasing; this is the history of the Vist Foundation."

Father killing son, son killing father—Banagher could only lower his head silently as he thought of the voice of his half-brother who may have died because of Banagher's own let down. Gael, who may have done lots of jobs that could not be seen under his father, showed a layer of gloom over his own face as he continued while trying to remain as calm as possible,

"I'm not too sure of what's inside the "Box" either. If it is just like what Master Cardeas said, that it can take back the promised future we should have…then, according to the meaning of the words, that means that the world lost the future it should have, and it is an incomplete world. The unchanging Federation continued to drive the notion that Earth is the center, and the Spacenoids are raised in the colonies. The independent movement that inherited the Zeon bloodline was absorbed by the economy, and the regimented conflicts continue without stopping…I suppose Master Cardeas must had some dream when he started giving you special training since young. The firstborn is as you can see, and there's no one to rely on, both within and outside the Foundation. Out of a sudden, you appeared as an outstanding child, and even from my viewpoint, I can say that you are a young man who was brought up very well. Yolu have the ability to think of how situations will play out, and at the same time, you have

the essence of intuition within you. This is just my imagination, but maybe Master Cardeas wanted you to be the successor and be the foundation of a world with a new system, rebuilt after the Box" is released."

"And mom hated it…"

She took me and ran away from dad. Gael looked away as Banagher muttered in his heart, "I can understand what your mother was thinking of." *and continued silently,*

"Of course, that includes the feeling Master Cardeas had, especially since he expected so much of you…I don't have a child, but I suppose his time with you was the happiest time for him. That was because someone could inherit his ideology and continue to live on after his death…which is the same as immortality."

That's too self-centered. The moment Banagher thought of this, Cardeas's dying expression and voice rang in his mind, causing the pain ripping his chest to fill his heart again. As he bit his lips, "But Master Cardeas respected your mother's wish." *Gael lowered his head intentionally as he spoke with a soft voice.*

"Perhaps he had already reflected on the consequences of forcing his ideals onto others stubbornly, the woman and child he loved leaving him as a result. No matter how old we are, men won't learn until they experience suffering once…I suppose him not appearing in front of him is the maximum sincerity he could show. You subconsciously sensed your father's thoughts, and your mother's thoughts too…it's because you understood both parties that you sealed you memories so that you would not be broken by it. This certainly is abnormal, and it probably is the result of your latent talent and your firm will; however, this memory loss is definitely not forced upon you. Since the seal of your memories is removed, please recall back. Is your father someone who would drug you?"

The eyes were looking at Banagher straight on, and it was a piercing expression looking into his heart. Banagher could not think of an answer as he immediately lowered his head.

"If that's not the case, it would be impossible for you to pilot the "Unicorn". It's because you're recognized as a true Newtype that it led you all the way here."

"The "Unicorn"…"

"The Laplace Program the Unit 01 is carrying. It's not just a navigation tool leading to the "Box"; when the NT-D is activated, it will also

determine if you're an artificial Newtype…the brainwaves of a Cyber-Newtype. Then, with the outcome, it will reveal the location of the "Box" in phases. Once the pilot is deemed to be a Cyber-Newtype, the Laplace Program will remain silent. It's because of this failsafe that he could hand it over to the "Sleeves". The "Unicorn" will never show the path to the "Unicorn" to the narrow-minded people who only think of rebuilding their country. On the other hand, if the pilot is a real Newtype…if a gentle person with deep insight truly exists according to Zeon Deikun definition, then that kind of person won't be limited by affiliation or self-awareness and will use the "Box" well…this doesn't just goes for Master Cardeas, but also for the Foundation Leader Syam Vist."

A person worthy of being entrusted with the "Box"—is a real Newtype. The first impression Banagher had of it that it was something seemingly baseless and nothing important. While he was shocked by how Cardeas could release the 'key' with such a belief, he could only imagine his father's mindset later on when the latter could only rely on it; while he could not laugh at this, and this seed of resigned laughter could only remain in his heart.

It was truly a noble yet stupid plan. His father was certainly a radical romantic for betting everything on an unconfirmed concept. Perhaps he was someone who simply could not act as a cunning war merchant thoroughly, and could only focus on other things. This understanding matched the image of the man who was completely honest with his mother, and became an idol who Banagher could empathize with.

As a human, as a man, and after experiencing the weight of reality, he could affirm and accept the imperfection of others. Right, Banagher's father told Banagher 'I understand'; because he understood, he was 'happy'. The unease and hatred clinging inside his heart melted away, and the bitterness of being unable to convey these thoughts seeped out, blocking Banagher's nose. He would never see his father, and though he finally managed to reach a place where he could see the back of his father, he could not touch, could not talk with him side by side, and could not give a toast for the future—he could not even give his father a final drink of water, though the latter must have been thirsty after bleeding so much…

"Up till now, you've been recognized by the "Unicorn"."

Gael continued, and Banagher sensed his vision blurring as he hurriedly wiped his eyes.

"However, as for whether I can conclude that you're a real Newtype… this isn't something I can know of. It fits logically, but it's not a

conclusion made by a machine. All I know is that you inherited Master Cardeas' firmness and rigor. That power allowed you to bring people together and make the "Unicorn" submit to you; I've seen it all. I won't say that this is a blessing, because this power will sometimes cause you to suffer. People follow you, and you have to repay their expectations. You will have lots of allies, and more enemies as a result. Things will naturally go well when you accomplish lots of them, but they will pinpoint the blame upon you when everything fails. When you inherit the aptitude of your father, you also have to beat this Cross. Now, what's driving this ship isn't military but you, the possibilities that you showed; the one uniting people of different backgrounds. You mustn't let them see you uneasy. Even if you don't have confidence, act like you have it and support that Princess of Zeon. This is the mission for a person with the same aptitude as your father…something called responsibility."

For some inexplicable reason however, he did not feel lost or revolted. As he merely felt the pressure on him turning into words, Banagher looked at Gael in the eyes with unexpected calm. *"I understand what you're saying."* Even the voice in his reply was very calm, and for a moment, he did not know if he was the one who said so.

"However, I have no intention of following my father's lifestyle. If I'm inheriting the Cross from father, I want to surpass him. I don't want to just bear responsibility, I want to…I don't know how to explain this, but I want to exist like a real Newtype, and I have even a little trace of this power, I want to use it well and become someone of worth. In order for that to happen, I mustn't be bound down by father's words. Thus… even if I find the "Box", I won't know if I can do as father wants me to do. Before I find a way for everyone, including father, to accept this, I…"

He knew that his words were showing his unawareness of his own limits, and this self-realization made his mouth heavy by the moment as he lowered his head. He was already mentally prepared, thinking that he may have enraged Gael, but the latter showed a gentle smile, *"That should be the case."* And spoke without restraint.

"If this isn't the case, there isn't a meaning in the change of eras."

"Change of eras…?"

"The inherited thoughts that surpasses eras will evolve little by little as we await the future. The ones who finally reach the peak are Newtypes. Don't you find this to be the case?"

Gael smiled as he said, but though his idea was brilliant, this did not

mean that the new responsibility Banagher bore would reduce, and he could not smile back. He was just trying his best to do the job, and did not feel that he was someone 'worthy of being entrusted with the "Box"'. The "Nahel Argama" would only team up with Zinnerman's company all because of the path Bright set up, and Audrey made the decisive push; he had the self-realization that he could not do anything alone, and if he were a real Newtype, there would be many situations where he should have handled things better.

However, Gael said that the luck to drive the people around him could be considered a talent, and said that it was a responsibility for him to act according to the people around him when he affirmed this self of him. He did not feel that he could do it, and could not even pretend to look at he could. The conversation he had with caused him to feel added weight upon him, but also gave him stability that balanced and strengthened his footing.

He was relieved, not because he knew that he did not have surgery or drugs administered to him. There was a problem with the definition, but the thorough education of his father's ideology doctrine in his youth made him a Cyber-Newtype to some extent. But if this was something that was done for his good, he could only accept this. His parents' thoughts were clashing, merging and encompassing him. Once his stand got clearer, he started to believe in his power, and pushed Haro, which felt warm in his hands, into his chests. *They did not meet each other because they loved each other; mother lived her life without any grudges because she recognized father for his mindset—*

"But what will you do after this?"

A voice from reality suddenly spoke to Banagher, dragging him out from his thoughts. Takuya was using his feet to hook on the railing as he looked down at Banagher, his hands in his pockets.

"Assuming that we find that "Laplace Box" or something, what do you want to do after that?"

As Takuya stared at him, Micott was standing at Takuya's feet, looking over with an earnest look. To them, this decision will affect the fate of this ship before it can decide the fate of the world. "…I still don't know." Banagher looked away first as he felt the responsibility becoming a weight pressing on him and delayed his answer,

"I don't know what's inside the "Box" anyway…what about you, Takuya?"

"Me? I want to stay in the military if possible. After the apprenticeship

on the “Nahel Argama”, I think I’m rather suited to this. What about you Micott?”

“Anyway, I want to head back to “Industrial 7” first. I’m worried about my family, and I won’t have a future if I don’t graduate from High School. Same goes for you too, Takuya.”

As Micott described this reality with the thought of a girl, “School… we’re talking about this now?” Takuya said with a bothered look, and her expression changed too. Perhaps she recalled the explosion that occurred at the school, the scene of the explosion that blew up the colony. Banagher looked at them, wanting to say something, “Let’s all go back to “Industrial 7”, then.” and spoke out what he suddenly thought of.

“The school’s gone, but there are other vocation schools too. Let’s just transfer there and graduate properly. It’s not too late to think about what we want to do in the future.”

He said, trying to convince himself that he had a future, but there was no sense of reality in it. Takuya and Micott may have choices, but he did not have one, and as he felt doubtful about this firm belief he had, “Don’t force yourself.” Takuya spoke, ostensibly chasing on, causing Banagher to look back at his face in shock.

“You don’t have to force yourself to come along with us. Just do what you want to do, Banagher.”

“I’m not thinking this…”

“You don’t have to. I’m not trying to be sarcastic here, you know”

“Yeah, Audrey…Princess Mineva needs you too. Follow your own path probably and become someone who we can declare as our friend proudly. We’ll cheer for you.”

The duo unwittingly approached each other as they said this, creating an atmosphere where Banagher could not merge into, and the latter felt a chill breeze blow by. *Why can they decide on their own lives so easily? Because they’re adults?* He answered his own question, and realized that he was the same too. He could not distinguish between what he wanted to do, what he could do, and what he had to do; the future was just a vague scene floating about, never to return. Once he found what he could do, he will complete what he had to do, and approach what he wanted to do. As they bore responsibility and pursue the happiness that was within arm’s reach, everyone’s heart had entered the phase of an adult.

The time to show the infinite possibilities of the future had ended, and this meant that the time to affirm that they were in reality had started. With this thought in mind, Banagher suddenly felt pessimistic. The narrow view caused by the self-restriction…would cause the world to shut off—*in that case, will only children become Newtypes? Are they merely like measles who can't get along with the maturity of adults?*

I'm someone who can change, and when I restrict myself, I have to bear responsibility before I can attain maturity. The conflicting thoughts were in his heart, and he looked at the void outside the window as his sight looked for a place to belong to. Countless stars were sticking at the window, not moving at all, and it was impossible to imagine the ship charging forward at several kilometers per second. However, the designated coordinates of the destination was certainly approaching them, and time continued to flow. While his heart wanted the belief in possibilities, but there also existed the self in him that gave up right from the beginning, an uneasiness he could not share with Takuya and Micott.

The weight of the Cross he inherited from his father increased, and his body, with the potential to grow further, creaked. But whether he was a Newtype or not, he had a firm premonition in his heart: that this would certainly be the last chance before he could have such a time with them again.

Part 12[edit]

Marida, still unconscious, was like a sleeping beauty in a fairy tale as she was nearly fully serene. Perhaps it was because her blue eyes that absorbed much hardship showed her tenderness. *What will she see the next time she opens her eyes?* This notion flashed through Zinnerman's mind, and once he concluded it would be better for her not to wake up now, he clenched his fist. *It'll be best if she doesn't know anything. If she can continue to sleep on like this, it'll be—*

There were no signs of anyone else in the intensive care room, and Doctor Hasan, who was originally in the linked infirmary, went by Zinnerman and left, saying that he wanted to get some documents. There were cameras on the ceiling, but why would Hasan be relaxed enough for him to let down his guard? There were many things that could be used as weapons here, and if he stole an operating scalpel, what would the doctor do next?

The cardiograph let out a regular electronic beep that resonated together with his heartbeat, and he felt the pressure deep within him rising. *What is this? What am I doing? What sort of person am I, alone in an ICU on a Federation ship?*

“You can hit me. You have the right as you raised me in place of my parents.”

He recalled Mineva’s voice in the midst of the silence. Once they were retrieved by the “Nahel Argama”, she said this while both parties were in a standoff, viewing each other as enemies. She admitted that she was the one who started everything, and turned to face every single, unable to hide the doubt within them, and called for both forces to stand on a common battlefront.

“Everyone on the “Nahel Argama”, comrades of the “Garencieres”, we may be enemies, but at the same time, we’re being hunted by our own armies because we’re too close to the “Laplace Box”. It’s said that the “Laplace Box” has the power to topple to world—to some, it’s a threat to them, a symbol of fear; to others, it’s a power to break the sealed deadlock. But no matter what it is, the “Box” is merely an item. Every point’s point of the ‘world’ is different, and with that comes the various meanings of this “Box” that turns us against each other. The world where the Federation ruled everything, the ideal world of Zeon Deikun…our world was divided because we had different backgrounds. However, while I, we are members of society, we are individual humans. Each of us should have our own ability to feel the world, and not let our past history or someone decide it for us. Our birthplaces will not change, but how we live will give us the power to change ourselves. I want to use my hands to witness the true identity of the “Laplace Box” personally. Perhaps the truth hidden within it will negate the conflict between the Federation and Zeon, and open a new world for both sides; perhaps that may be toxic to all of humanity…but I want to confirm this. Thus, if there is a need, I’m prepared to abandon the world that made me what I am today…I’ll abandon Neo Zeon.”

Soldiers never had much imagination, and they did not have any feeing as to what the world would become of; if anyone asked them of their own opinions, they would be troubled, but the last line toppled all understanding everyone had.

Abandon Neo Zeon—this line from Mineva, and Zinnerman’s decision to provide the “Garencieres” as bait, decided the fate of the Garencieres team. They were not imprisoned, and could move freely within the ship ‘without division between Federation and Neo Zeon’. This was the result of the abnormal power shown by the “Unicorn Gundam”, and also the words Mineva said to add on to it.

She was originally a smart girl, but assuming the identity of Audrey Burne for more than a month had made her grow up greatly. As he looked back on Mineva, who he had been taking care of before “Axis”

was taken down, and watched for grow for 10 years, he was delighted that she was able to assume the knack as a leader. He knew that there was nothing to rely on with regards to the current Neo Zeon, and there was no place for him left as he had disobeyed orders, but that was a different issue from whether he was to work together with the Federation. No matter whether anyone wanted to cross the line, the Federation was the Federation, and Zeon was Zeon. The past could not be changed, and the present had not been changed; the reality shown in those eyes did not change at all.

As a Zeon soldier, he was riding on a Federation ship, breathing the same air as the same people who killed Fee and Maree, eating the same food as them; this was all he could understand, and the same went for Flaste and company. *The Princess and Banagher don't understand. We're soldiers; we're guerilla forces that are like pirates. We don't have any imagination, and we don't have the brains to associate ourselves with such noble ideals.*

The world divided by others, the world I feel—but no matter where I am, it has nothing to do with me. My world had already ended from the moment Fee and Maree were killed…

Suddenly, he sensed a stare. The curtain of a partition shook slightly, and something poked out from through the gap. Once he realized that it was pocket bottle of whiskey, he stopped himself from backtracking, and frowned. The gap between the curtains was pulled aside, and the man lying on the neighboring bed showed his bald head, and the familiar eyes were grinning back at him.

"I said that I'll give you a toast if I survived, right?"

Gael smiled as he shook the pocket bottle in his head. Zinnerman had heard that he was undergoing treatment in the ship, but it was the first time they met face to face. Zinnerman scanned through his face that looked a lot skinner and the bandages under the pajamas, "Where did you get that from?" he asked as he received the bottle. Gael however merely chuckled and did not answer. His presence felt stronger while on the brink of death, and that was the bold smile of the man doing secret work for the Vist Foundation.

"I have to thank you for Banagher Links."

Gael said as he held the wound on his abdomen and got up. Zinnerman glanced sideways and looked up at his face.

"He's the son of what I consider my savior. If anything goes wrong, I won't have any face to show when I head down to the netherworld."

News of Banagher's heritage had reached Zinnerman's ears through Otto's mouth. Though Zinnerman was not exactly feeling betrayed, he was certainly shocked to some extent the moment he heard of it. As he recalled this feeling, "I never thought that he had the Vist blood in him…" he murmured. He turned his back towards Gael, who was giving him a probing look, and continued to look at the sleeping Marida. *He's of a different breed too—he started from a different point, and his future won't be on the same side as me, that's all…*

"I never did anything worthy of being thanked for. We're the ones who were saved."

"But he respects you like a father. It's because of your recognition that he can get onto the "Nahel Argama" in this state."

Upon hearing Gael's baritone voice, the pressure in Zinnerman's heart got worse. *A father—are you kidding me?* He clenched the pocket bottle in his hands as he looked at Marida again, unable to pretend to act calm anymore. "It certainly is an amazing." Gael however did not seem to notice anything amiss as he continued,

"It's true that he has the charisma his father has, but that's not all. There's something that entered his heart, shaking up whatever's within hinm…"

"He's just a kid. That's why he can barge into other people's hearts without any concerns and talk whatever he wants."

"Maybe, but maybe he instinctively knew that it's better for him to reveal everything within him than to bear everything stubborn. We adults need to shed off our false appearances…"

Gael's wry presence shook Zinnerman as the latter turned his back on the former. If he were to shed off his pretense, he would be unable to hold back his urge to yell out, and took a deep sigh. "I'm like this now." Gael's voice continued from behind.

"I want to help him, but I have limits too. I hope that you can watch over him in my stead. For the sake of this situation—"

"Don't overestimate me."

The pressure forced Zinnerman to his limit, and he released it in a forced voice. After exchanging looks with a silent Gael, he immediately looked away, looking for a means of escape from the silent Marida.

"…This doesn't suit me. I'm really not a trustworthy person."

He lowered his head and looked at pocket bottle he no longer felt like

drinking from, and eked out this line, ostensibly trying to convince himself. Gael did not speak up, and the infirmary was so silent one may hear a pin drop. The sound of the cardiograph continued to echo, making a regular beep of the heart that was like a countdown timer.

Part 13[edit]

Zinnerman left the infirmary and hid in a blind spot of the cross junction. The figure of an officer in grey uniform shook, giving off a tense presence. Zinnerman continued on his way while pretending not to notice, and went off to the elevator in the gravity-free block.

The man in officer uniform pretended to pass by as he followed. Perhaps he was a guard, and the crew of the “Nahel Argama” was not completely nice. While they allowed the Garencieres crew to move about freely, they set up inspectors to check on their movements. Zinnerman however felt relieved instead of annoyed as he stopped in front of the elevator. He checked the time when he left the infirmary, and the electronic sound indicating the arrival of the elevator rang right at the moment he expected.

He shook off the inspector who hurriedly tried to pursue them, and the elevator closed its door. Flaste was already inside the cylindrical elevator, leaning his back on their wall.

They looked at each other for a moment, and then averted them and coughed as a signal. There was no need for them to worry about the inspectors or being eavesdropped on, but there was not much time for them to talk. Thus, as long as they time the moment they get inside the elevator, this place would become a convenient secret chat place. Zinnerman did not look at the camera on the ceiling as he turned his head to the elevator door, turning his back on Flaste and asking, “How is it?” Flaste, who was leaning on the wall, “Just as we expected.” Quickly murmured.

“The logistics and personnel are insufficient, and the ones remaining seem to be rookies. The equipment management is also very sloppy.”

“Communications?”

“Only the bridge and the 3rd communication room can allow for laser communication. The security on both sides is high, but nobody’s watching the signal equipment giving off our coordinates. The specs are no different from Zeon, and Tomura should be able to do something about it.”

“Alright, the moment when we check on the next coordinates, the L1 junction will be the chance. Notify everyone, and get ready for action

any time soon.”

The elevator door slid open, and their meeting time ended. Zinnerman left Flaste behind, kicked the floor, and left the elevator. As it continued to head down behind him, he grabbed the lift grip and slid through the corridor. The red-faced officer coming up from behind was a crew who received a command to continue the inspection through the wireless. Zinnerman was amazed by their decent communication skills, and suddenly felt like playing a prank.

He suddenly stopped at the communication panel on the wall and summoned the visuals of the outside. As he pretended to look at the space behind him, he deliberately watched the moments of the inspector closing in on him. Unable to stop midway through, the inspector could only pass by behind Zinnerman. However, just when the inspector looked as if he was about to leave, he looked at Zinnerman’s face through the reflection of the panel, and muttered something before vanishing.

Zeon Swine. Zinnerman reflected on these words that clearly echoed in him, and looked at the endless darkness on the panel. He still could not see the ‘L1 junction’ the next coordinates indicated. Before the Universal Century started, ‘space lighthouses’ were built at Lagrange Points, but now, they became useless trash floating in space. *No matter whether the “Box” is there or nothing, we can’t let it enter the hands of the “Nahel Argama”. It’s time to find a way to return to our world before we’re completely immobilized.*

It can’t be helped, he muttered in his heart. He had no intention of denying the world Mineva and Banagher saw, but he could not stay in them, and the Federation officer that just brushed by was the same. Humans could not become that sturdy and noble; they are restrained by their birthplaces, imprisoned by their past, and will hover in the torrent of trends they could not change. The only thing they could not was to make minor choices in the process, giving them the false feeling that they had control over their lives.

This is reality— Zinnerman stared at his face reflected off the panel, and muttered in his heart as he looked into the void. His eyes that appeared in this voice was duller than the stars, like two holes piercing through space.

Chapter 2[edit]

Part 1[edit]

May 9th, GMT 13:45. There were clear skies above Dakar, but the streets was shrouded in a gloomy smell of a fire disaster, and the rubble, which may take a while to be removed, were still scattered everywhere; however, the slightly black smoke shrouding the skies for several days had subsided. The sun, close to the Equator, was not blocked by anything as it shone upon the streets littered with ash.

Kai Shiden did not hate the heat of summer, but the scorching blaze of this African continent was too extreme for him. He put his coat, which he had no intention of wearing, on his shoulder, wiped the sweat off his forehead, and stopped at the Avenue Pasteur of the autonomous street.

He looked up at the large block from beyond the toppled trucks and collapsed buildings. 8 days ago, a mobile armor assaulted Dakar single-handed, and now, its large hill-like body was covered by dust-proof sheet used for construction, while its skeletal frame that was dissected was left on this autonomous street. The shoulder armors poking out from the sides were removed, and the cannon that was used to destroy the high rise building of the Hotel Empire was isolated, but this enemy unit debris looked extremely abnormal, its height being a match for a 10 floor building. Everything looked like a remnant of a nightmare left in the wasteland of the summer heat, whether it was the maroon armor that could be seen through the gap of the plastic sheet, or the claw that still looked alive as it embedded itself on the road surface.

The path the mobile suit passed through showed the scene of a tragedy akin to that of a carpet bombing. The work to search through the remains of the rubble and the recovery of life essentials was going on; fire trucks and cranes were gathered, sirens were blazing everywhere, and the disaster victims were lined up in a single file in front of the hydrant trucks. On the other side, a GM type with a rifle was moving with its chin up, chest out, and disc-shaped transformable mobile suits flew by in the sky. *Did I bring a camera?* Kai subconsciously thought, and then got rid of this notion wryly. *I'm not in this position now. The ones in charge of reporting the current situation in Dakar is the current reporters working for the news agencies. If there were people making a news report of the people stepping on the glass scattered on the road, running out from the Senate building, they would be able to make it in time for the night news. Their immediate priority would be to prepare the report they wanted to send to their headquarters in their trailers, charge into the news center at the Central Senate Council hall.*

This was the biggest terrorist attack since the 'colony drop' 3 years

ago, and it had been a week since the Federation government issued an emergency order. Rumors of a 3rd Neo Zeon war started to rumble, causing Dakar to not only become a simple disaster zone, but also a forum for government policies, an important place to interview more than usual. Kai glanced aside at the reporters who were frantically getting on the vehicles, and once he left the avenue, went off to the Senate Council hall he saw. The Greek-styled pure white buildings lost most of the glass in front of, but it still preserved some form of emanation, showing that it was the nest of authority. The mobile armor used up all its power approximately 200m in front of the building, and its crustacean-like arms were stabbed into the ground, still showing the dissatisfaction of being unable to reach the throne.

He passed by the “Guntank II” that was as ridiculously large as the tank, went by a series of security checkpoints, and entered the hall. The lobby was filled with the buzzing of the lobbyists, reporter teams, protestors like usual, but the scene of the repair workers going in and out, the armed soldiers protesting, gave a vibe that this was different from usual. Kai followed the instructions he was given, rode on the elevator and went up to the 8th floor. He stepped onto the corridor that was well furnished like a hotel, and saw flags of individual countries and the entrance of the Central Senate office, where the Earth Federation flag was. After walking down the long corridor for another 2 minutes, he found the office of Upper House Senator Ronan Marcenas of the first constitutional area in North America.

He passed through the ajar door, and first saw a ladder used by the workers to change the light panels on the ceiling. He looked across, and found cracks covering a third of the floor, and approximately 10 general stuff members were in the dim admin room answering calls. He could see that the tables, totalling more than 30, were rearranged back to their original positions, and the dust and rubble scattered on the floor was already cleared up; however, this could not hide the signs of chaos brought about by the unprecedented tremors and shocks. The phones continued to ring at this point, and the contents most likely included the usual contacts, catch-up, those trying to get benefits for the reconstruction, protests, or people donating money, holding to get involved with the military. Ever since the Defence Minister John Bauer mentioned about war, the people coveting the special needs of war started to take action secretly, and the owner of this office had the political power to pass judgement over their aspirations. The duty staff was gauging the importance of the callers, looking at the terminal monitor as they planned the schedule, looking equally tense.

Kai arrived a little earlier than the appointed time. There was no one at

the counter, and Kai did not want to distract the staff that was completely focused in their jobs, and sighed as he decided to wait a little longer. He remembered that there was an ash tray beside the elevator hall, and took out the cigarettes he kept with him at all times ever since he started as a writer; he intended to leave the office first, “Are you Mr. Kai Shiden?” but a line stopped him.

“I’ve been waiting for you. I’m the secretary who conversed with you on the phone, Patrick Marcenas.”

The appropriately tanned face showed a bright smile; Kai read the reports on this man who was approximately 30 years old. He was the son-in-law married into the Marcenas family, and the first secretary of Ronan who was ready to get ready for a local election. Kai held the outstretched hand from Patrick, looked straight at the latter’s smile that was hiding a tense expression in it, and smiled back. “Please follow me.” After this, Patrick said and turned around as he passed through the office that was still buzzing with phone calls.

“I’m really sorry that we couldn’t come out to invite you in. As you can see, we’re still in a devastating mess…was the flight okay for you?”

“Yeah. It’s been a while since I rode on a military transport carrier. It was certainly a special treatment; I wonder if it’s because of the prestige the Senator had.”

Kai’s voice had some spite in this. Unlike the military, who wanted to restrict people from entering and leaving, all reporter-related personnel wanted to enter Dakar. While every major media center was spending large sums to get a few of their people in, only Ronan could let a freelance reporter ride in on a transport carrier.

“I’m really sorry, but at this time, we can’t ensure any flight seats for civilians.” Patrick answered as he faced forward. He glanced aside at Kai, and then, seemed to make up his decision as he spoke up,

“It’s personal, but it’s really an honor to see you. Actually, I’m a fan of yours, Mr Kai, not only for your talent as a reporter, but also—”

“As the weak Kai Shiden, a crew member of the original “White Base”.”

Kai spoke up first, “Ah, that’s not…” and Patrick, who was flustered, hurried up and looked away. This view was kept aside for a moment, but it was not uncommon to see people say such lines after seeing war documentaries through their youth. “A lot of things written in the books are wild stories.” Kai showed a wry smile as he reminded Patrick.

“Some writers have their own conclusions before they interview, and

they won't change it even when I do an interview check for such people. All books related to "White Base" seem to be of this kind too, but it certainly taught me something."

It just so happened I came to this profession after the war. Patrick did not look at Kai , who continued on, and put his hand behind his back, lowering his reddened face. "I'm sorry for raising something I shouldn't have mentioned." Upon hearing this reply, Kai looked forward at the office approaching in front of him.

There were interviewers who look down on their interviewees, and there were also interviewees who manipulate the interviewers, wanting to turn the interviewer into a tower of propaganda for them. What was the reason the owner of this room, the Senator of the Settlement Issues Council, summoned him from Paris? It was impossible that he would be looking to ask Kai to write a biography after this Dakar Incident and all sorts of strange events. It seemed that this was a secret battle between Neo Zeon, the Vist Foundation and the Senate Council, and Kai heard of the situation through acquaintances in the industry.

Whatever the case was, this would be a tough battle for Kai. He raffled his grey hair and put on his coat. This undistinguished 35 year old looked like a proper reporter after adjusting his appearance. This was the first thing this young man, who was enlisted on the spot while studying in High School, and survived the events of the One Year War on the "White Base", learned after leaving the secular world.

Part 2[edit]

(…In the past, the Principality of Zeon brought great damage to Earth through its blitzkrieg operations. Some felt that they had to do this against the Federation, which outnumbered Zeon forces by a hundred. But what are we getting when we do this? Up till now, we're just slandered with the name of butchers who took the lives of half of humanity, unable to shake off our hatred. One might say that this price was overly massive for a mere temporary tactical advantage. We, the people of the Zeon Republic understood this clearly. When the Dakar incident happened, our government sent in aid faster than any other side, showing that we are reflecting on our past misdeeds. We're decisively against terrorism, and though we're comrades, we do not recognize the existence of Neo Zeon. However, a group of people in the Federation Council associate us, the Republic, with Neo Zeon, and insist on investigating us. They use the merger 4 years later as an excuse, and it's not just one media stations saying that the Republic has gone out of control, which really upsets us. War is not beneficial,

and we know—”

The moment the man on the television, the door made of Mahogany let out a knocking, and the guest and Patrick appeared.

This man Puerto Rican's face had a unique look, and he certainly was the one Ronan saw on the recent photograph. “Welcome.” Ronan Marcenas spoke up and went to the door to invite him in. Ronan had learned, inherently through his life as a politician, that being straightforward to someone he met for the first time and exerting strength of his grip was a way to take the initiative on someone; however, Kai Shiden did not look intimidated as he held the hand, deliberately showing a slight smile.

Ronan sensed that it would be a major obstacle for him to overcome, and let the other man sit at the chair of his office table, “Is there anything you wish to drink?” he asked, but was faced with an unfaltering expression, “No need for that.” It seemed that this man fully understood how not to be led by the other party. *You can head back down.* Ronan told Patrick with his eyes as he sat down on the chair at the office, his back facing the window. Kai did not look at his actions as he looked towards the television, still switched on, with a relaxed expression.

The man answering the interview from some major television broadcasting agency was lamenting the difficulties the Zeon Republic had, and his voice and expression were full of pretense. “Certainly a melodrama suitable for the afternoon.” Ronan finished, and watched Kai’s reaction. The latter merely gave a glance and withstood the initial volley without expression.

“That’s the Defense Minister of the Zeon Republic, Monaghan Baharov. He’s a man who bears the tragedy of a defeated country, but he’s working secretly with people of the old Principality, and has splurged a lot of money in the revival of the Federation. He’s also investing in the rightists promoting Zeonism, even collecting award winning papers from the Republic Army.”

“Award winning papers?”

“The themes are regarding the issues over safety and security, and basically, it’s a selection test used to sort out the rightists. After that, the ones he picked out will be sent to important places, and if there’s a need, he can use them as chess pieces.”

“And this necessary moment is?”

“I don’t understand that much, but they aren’t exactly hoping to fight

the Federation. The recent economic downtime had brought about an increase in the radicals, but most of the Republic still do not like to fight after what happened in the Wars. However, the “Sleeves” are using their main forces, the “Geara Zulu”, which development’s is partly related to Anaheim. The central party are the people from the old Zeonic companies, and some of those people are working under Monaghan’s company…in this sense, we can’t see them as playing games only.”

He switched off the television with the remote and looked at the face on the other side of the table. If this were any ordinary reporter, he would be hooked on to this inside scoop. However, Kai did not have a single note as he merely looked back cautiously. *So a man who experienced countless harrowing experiences of life and death in his youth can remain this calm?* Kai’s face overlapped with the mental image of Bright Noa Ronan saw in his own house, leaned his back on the leather, “I’ve read through your popular work” and got down to business.

“The “Sunset of the Giants”, “Hell in Heaven”…each of these pieces had a unique entry point. There are a lot of these supposed anti-war reports, but it’s rare to see such works with anti-war sentiments like yours. Is this style due to your upbringing as a pilot on the White Base team?

Kai showed a stoned unsmiling expression as he did not answer this question. This boy was involved in the flames of Side 7 when the War started, was taken onto “White Base” as a refugee, and became a locally-enlisted soldier, the pilot of a newly developed mobile suit. It certainly sounded like something any war fanatic would like, a glamorous tale of a hero; however, the common understanding about him in many records stated that he was an opportunist with a vicious mouth. Despite that, he was trained by the military, and after the War, he enrolled in the Belfast University under the social reentry program, majored in journalism, worked at a news agency, and finally became a famous freelance reporter; it was said that a lot of young people respected him and felt familiarity with him.

However, such appraisal to Kai was most likely just a fetter, and Ronan could imagine this from his experience talking with Bright. As Kai remained silent, watching his own attitude, “But there’s something I’m very concerned with.” Ronan let out a probing voice.

“It’s your viewpoint regarding Zeon. You doubted the Space Administration after the war, and revealed the truth about the oppressed Spacenoids, but criticized the activities of the Zeon remnant

forces harshly…to a point where you seem to hate them; you're especially critical of Char, who led the Neo Zeon army. The reporters supporting the Spacenoids are mostly a little sympathetic to him…"

"Basically, the intellectuals who'll criticize such writing are the dissidents against this fad."

Kai shrugged as he crossed his long legs, and continued,

"That's why it's easier to accept a writer who writes in a way that sympathizes with the Zeon remnants. As for why I'm not on the same side, is it because I was a pilot who fought against Char on White Base? It's a conditional yes. Since I'm a little famous, I can ignore the norm of the industry and write on. If there's any basis for me, it's that I believe that the media isn't supposed to be a wind vane."

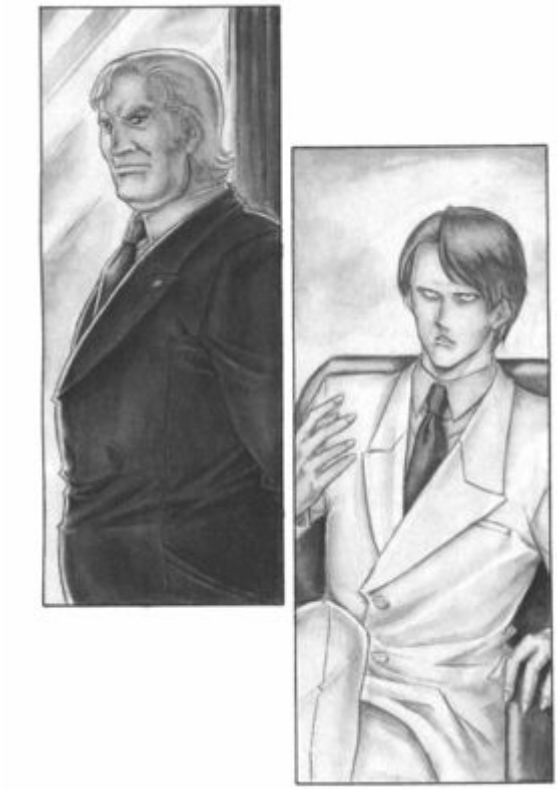
"Wind vane…being blown by the wind called the public…is it?"

Kai did not answer, and as their expressions of suppressed emotions met, Ronan decided that it was time as he stood up and turned to the window behind him. The newly changed glass dimly reflected Kai's expression, watching Ronan's actions.

"A certain politician wants to reveal extremely important insider information that has something to do with security. What will you do if you're that politician?"

"I'll call in the reporters from all major media stations and arrange a news conference. No matter what, that person definitely won't look for a freelance reporter."

This voice suppressed Ronan's thoughts and split his thoughts in half. His lips twist in a smile, "But that politician doesn't trust the media." and answered,



“No matter what that politician says, it’ll merely be broadcasted for 30 seconds at most on the news. Even if it becomes a featured story, once the commercials end and the sports news begin, no one will think anything of it. There’s the ratings, hits, printing numbers, advertising revenue. The bigger the media gets, the wind called the public will get stronger, and will air these many viewpoints as a correct view. In this sense, a freelancer’s work—”

“Isn’t as free as what the term indicates. As long as the economic activity forbids such releases, there are some rules we have to abide by.”

“I feel that my insight can still distinguish which are the industry rogues that are only thinking of earning money, and which aren’t. It’s troubling if it’s a weak idealist, but there are solid professionals who insist on following their own principles even if they do follow the rules.”

Kai remained silent, not denying at all. *Very good.* Ronan exhaled and sat opposite Kai.

“Have you heard of the “Laplace Box”?”

Ronan saw that this reporter, who remained unflappable up till this point, showed signs of faltering. “I did hear rumors about it …” Kai lowered his crossed legs and muttered. “What kind of rumors?” Ronan kept watching Kai as he asked.

“An acquaintance planned to use this as a featured topic. The release was set, and the first issue was serialized on a magazine, but there was no second print. A month later, even the magazine itself was out of business, even though it printed quite a lot.”

“Once the advertising revenue is cut off, a magazine can’t do anything no matter how good it sells. What about that peer of yours?”

“He’s not in this industry now. I don’t know what happened to him now.”

“Maybe he’s drowned in some sea or became some space dust. Maybe he was given a little bit of money to live a carefree life. It’s not impossible. It’s not easy to eliminate someone, even for the Vist Foundation.”

Kai’s silent expression showed that he had a minimum understanding of the black mist shrouding the Foundation’s “Box”. “There’s still 30 minutes left.” Ronan looked at the clock on the wall, and said,

“There’s a vote at the conference hall at 3pm, and I can only talk with you until then. After that, you can decide how to deal with this. However, I hope that you can hurry and notify more and more people about this. You’re the only one who can do this and not let the truth be twisted.”

Kai suppressed his doubt and tension from his face as he looked at Ronan’s eyes for no more than 3 seconds. He reached his hand for the bag at his feet, took out a notebook and a tape recorder. Just when he was about to press the switch of the recorder, their eyes met again, and Kai wordlessly put the recorder back in. Ronan smiled slightly and clenched his fists that were on the table.

“I have sufficient evidence to prove that the Vist Foundation is interfering with the Senate Council through improper means, and carrying out battles however they want. The aim of the Foundation is to retake the “Laplace Box” before it gets released, and for this reason, they created more unnecessary damages by having several small skirmishes with Neo Zeon, which is also hoping to get the “Box”. “Industrial 7”, “Palau”, the “Laplace” relic; It’s the same for Dakar and Torrington.”

Kai stopped his hand from writing on, and the sound of the crane far

away rumbled the air inside this air-conditioned room. Ronan took this sharp stare from Kai head out and took out a stack of information from his table drawer.

“This is a list of the Senate Council members involved with the Foundation, and they apply special counter-terrorist laws without the recognition of the Senate Council to deploy forces; even till now, they’re profiting off the Foundation. If we don’t reassign them and rebuild the command structure of the military, it’ll be hard to hope for the revival of security. If this can get the media to use this as a chance to move, the prosecutors who had their heads pressed down by the Foundation finally have some purpose.”

Kai flipped through the list of officials printed on the A4 paper, and looked back with a doubtful look. Ronan leaned his body on the table, and said,

“We’ll do our utmost to protect your personal safety. Of course, the Foundation will use all sorts of means to obstruct us—”

“What can you get?”

Kai raised a finger to stop Ronan from continuing, and asked on, “This “Laplace Box” is said to have the power to topple the Federation government, and the Foundation and the government have a common goal to prevent it from being released. It’ll certainly be an issue if there’s improper interference with the military’s command structure, but can’t you do this before they secure the “Box”?”

“If it were that easy, of course, but the results are just as you see. There’s a need to eliminate interference from the Foundation, unite the military with the government, and face this situation with a reformed attitude.”

Kai snorted as an answer and leaned his back on the chair. His expression was saying that he would not accept such an answer; he was approaching using the nose of a reporter, but he was keeping his distance, watching if he was to be made use of by a politician—*this man’s sharper than I thought.* Ronan sensed some difficulty, but also felt a delight of a long-awaited intellect agitating his sense, and tapped his fingers on the armrests of the chair.

“You’re asking me what benefits are there for me, is it? A benefit I can get is that I can get a good night’s sleep. I think about the horror if the “Box” falls into Neo Zeon’s hand, what happens if a man like Monaghan uses it, the anxiety of the One Year War nightmare reenacting again…this is what I want to eliminate. I suppose you

should understand, since you're not affected by the trends and continue to notice the danger of Zeon."

Ronan did not wait for Kai's response as he again stood up and looked outside the window. The remains of the mobile armor stood behind the legislation building opposite.

"The Federation isn't as stubborn as what those calling for a change in establishment are saying. As long as there's an opportunity, this united government that's less than 150 years old can be toppled easily. As an installation and avenue of resentment outburst, Zeon's thoughts are too dangerous. Before the Republic hands over its autonomy again, just when this nightmare's about to end, this radical…the Vist Foundation has to bear responsibility. Also, the "Laplace Box" should be under the control of the Federation government. This is our common understanding."

"What do you mean by 'our'?"

"You can consider it to be the view of the ruling faction and military personnel not corrupted by the Foundation, with the Settlement Issues Council leading the charge."

"So you're using the chaos of the space army realignment plan to counter those giving unnecessary equipment in this counter-terrorism plan…is it?"

The pursuing expression was laid upon Ronan's back, and he hid the pain of being cornered, "This sure is tough." Kai did not show a smile, and his stare remained unmoved.

"It's true that a ship that can't respond quickly or a mobile suit isn't very suited for counter-terrorism, but even as the appearance of war changes, human sensitivity will not change that easily. There's also the thinking to preserve the prestige of the nation's authority."

"Preserve the authority…"

"A fleet that's deployed like a tall wall, a powerful mobile suit squad full of invincible warriors; such psychological impact on humans are not to be underestimated, even in this era of where information battles or special forces operations are important. A power that can be seen by the naked eye can cause fear in others, and prevent a second Zeon from appearing again."

"In other words, you want to use a high wall to surround the Earth by using the authority of the Earth Federation as guarantee, a tall wall with the words 'obey me' plastered on it, not budging even if there's a

conversation?"

Ronan resisted the urge to confirm Kai's view as he narrowed his eyes at the latter, and felt a bitterness of being tricked. "I made a little investigation on your career before I came your, Senator." Kai again folded his legs and said,

"You brought about a wave of new life for the Federation after the War, and was a liberal, just like the first Prime Minister Ricardo…when you were nominated for the Senate for the first time, this was what the media was praising you by. In fact, you can be considered an anomaly for the Marcenas family after Ricardo was killed. The first thing you did after being elected was to move to Dakar, right? There are several other places for candidacy, but you insisted on coming to Dakar, this land that may be buried by sand a hundred years later as desertification continues."

Ronan resisted the impact of the wedge striking him in the chest, and barely managed to eke out a wry smile. Kai put his clasped hands on his folded legs and continued without looking away,

"Earth was starting to show signs of recovery due to the Space Migration Plan, but the fact was that the destruction of the One Year War brought it to the brink of danger again. As someone pushing for policies, you had to often experience the urgent needs Earth had, to think of what you had to do next…at that time, there were some who said that you were doing this for the sake of popularity, but this isn't all, I suppose. You do have belief, you believe in improving human civilization, to continue to coexist together with Earth. You believe that Earth shall be the eternal homeland for humanity, and everyone should head to space—"

"That's a mistake by a reporter affected by Zeon. I'm not that much of a radical."

Ronan immediately interrupted Kai, but he could not seal off the sediment that was oozing out from the scar in his chest as he looked away and let his eyes waver. *Right, I did once think of it this way…* he muttered in his heart that was full of sediment, and secretly clenched his fists under the table. *If I were the change the nature of the Federation, the curse of the "Box" will vanish. If I can grab the 'future we should have' with my own hands, I won't have to fear the "Box", and I won't have to restrain my children with the curse of the Marcenas —*

"And that you now choose to protect your power."

Kai said. Ronan's wavering eyes looked back at him.

"You, who once pleaded that humanity should turn their eyes to space, now fear the independence movement of Spacenoids like a plague, and want to build a tall wall around Earth. Why is that?"

“…Humans can’t keep their vibrant youthful energy forever. Once you have the necessary responsibilities, you should understand. Is such an answer not good for you?”

He answered almost instinctively, and felt that he could not continue talking; this catastrophic situation suddenly brought about a tremendous fatigue on him as he sighed. Was this a sigh that indicated the wasted precious time, or was this a sigh over how his past was unexpectedly revealed to him? Ronan remained confused as he was unable to tell “I’m not really unhappy about this.” He heard Kai’s response, and sensed that the latter put down his folded legs as he closed the notebook.

“I do feel that I’m an adult too, but I don’t want to forget how I don’t want to see this in an adult.”

Kai stood up while lowering his stare. “I’m sorry, but I can’t seem to help you here.” Upon hearing Kai’s voice, Ronan knew that this was a conclusion to be expected.

“I’m personally interested in the Vist Foundation and the “Laplce Box”, but it’s not in my nature to be a negative propaganda tool. Please look for someone else.”

“…Captain Bright Noa is also involved. Are you still not going to change your mind even after hearing this?”

There had to be a limit to his struggling. He knew that very well, but Ronan said it out. Kai, who was about to leave, stopped in his tracks and practically rolled his eyes as he looked over his shoulders.

“He’s like you, unwilling to be a lackey thirsty for power, and got reassigned to the Senate Council as a result. Londo Bell’s backers are protecting him, but it’s hard to return him to his position as commander. I still have a way however if we can clear up the conspirators with the Foundation.”

“Senator Ronan, I don’t want to think that being shameless in your actions is what an adult should be.”

The growl caused Ronan to experience a second stab in his chest again. “You should be able to understand.” Kai said and turned away again.

“It’s okay to turn rogue, but for someone like you with such a standing, I hope you don’t show how much you have fallen. Did your son not leave the house because he could not take it?”

It was the final lunge at his wound, and Kai left the room without

looking back. *This isn't true,* Ronan wanted to yell out, but could not as he watched Kai leave wordlessly. He could not bring himself to call Patrick to send the guest away, and his eyes, which had nowhere to go, escaped upon the photos hanging on the wall. These were photos of himself, whether it was when he appeared on the cover of a weekly magazine, the photo with the Prime Minister back then during the memorial of the end of the War, and so on. Amongst all these photos that clearly showed any passers-by his decorated career as a politician, there was a photo of him with his family and the recently built Senate Council hall in the background.

There was his wife, narrowing her eyes, ostensibly complaining that the sunlight in Africa was too strong, Cynthia, who was in the vibrancy of her youth, and Riddhe, who was less than 10 years old. As Ronan stood there, unable to show a sincere smile once he started to understand the rule that this world could not change, Riddhe was showing a weird stiff smile beside him. At that time, he would mimic Ronan's own actions which he somehow saw, and was often reprimanded by his mother. In fact, Riddhe, who seemed to be giving an adult-manufactured smile, looked just as pitiful as Ronan was.

Right, that child understood. Ronan looked at the door and imagined Kai's back on it, telling himself the words he could not say out. *That child understood everything and accepted the destiny of the Marcenas family. I let that child bear the burden of the "Box". I wanted to change everything in this generation, but I couldn't do anything, and added the burden of my father and grandfather upon him.*

Ever since the battle of Torrington, there was no news of Riddhe. His "Delta Plus" was reclaimed safely, so he probably was not hurt. This news alone was enough for Ronan. No matter where Riddhe was, no matter what happened to him, he would not betray the Marcenas' destiny. Even though others could not understand, he could firmly believe so.

That was why he was suffering, that was why he was in pain. Ronan imagined that silhouette similar to his own, suffering from the despair in a place Ronan could not see—a man who never had pressure before would not understand. Ronan looked away from the old family photo, and let out a deep sigh. The rumbling of the cranes outside shook the air in the room, slowly stirring at the emptiness that came with this time.

Part 3[edit]

"A secret code used during the war?"

The body floated down the ramp tilted at a tight angle, and went from the hatch on the floor into the bridge. Gilligan Eustace grabbed onto the handrail at the door, and before the magnets on his soles landed on the floor, there was a reply from the Captain's seat. "It looks like it's the same one used during the drop on Earth" Upon hearing this, he trembled with excitement.

"The signal beacon sent has been pinging the same code. We're still analyzing the contents."

"Location?"

"In the middle of L1. It seems to be near the 'light tower'. The ship has been slowing down since just now…"

Captain Hohgy said as he pointed his chin at the navigation window on the left side of the screen. It was not a distance where they could do anything immediately, but Hohgy's completely relaxed expression made Gilligan unhappy within. After 10 years of military life that did not seem like one, Hohgy ended up with this face that had completely forgotten what it meant to be a warrior. At Gilligan's own age, this man was involved in real battles against the Federation.

"No doubts about it. This is the ship Lord Monaghan told us of, the "Mock Wooden Horse" of the "Nahel Argama"…"

Gilligan did not look at the face of the Captain, but exchanged looks with the navigation officer, a comrade, holding the steer at the steering seat. The navigation officer facing, looking extremely excited for having a real mission for the first time. The cannons operator, the ship operator and the rest were all feeling excited too, and there were 5 of these cadres working on the bridge. These faces would soon create new history for the Zeon Republic. People like Hohky, who were filled with the knowledge of defeat, the adults who did not accomplish anything, did not have the power to stop them. As Gilligan decided this in his heart, "Tell our country and the "Sleeves" he commanded to the communication operator on the starboard terminal.

"Also, captain. Our "Gulltoppr" will link up with the "Dromi", and we'll carry out tracking and observation of the "Mock Wooden Horse". I hope that we can immediately break ranks and head to L1."

As Gilligan acted in insubordination as he said these words, the other cadres had their eyes focused on the Captain's seat. Hohky could not hide the surprised on his face, "What about the support of the training fleet?" he asked with a restrained ship.

"We'll let the "Bifrest" continue on alone. This is an official port call

given to us; we have to let the fleet commander complete it."

"This is against the treaty! Our army is forbidden from fighting outside our territory without any request from the Federation."

"The fleet commander has known about it. The main forces of the "Sleeves" will reach the scene, and it'll take a day at least to reach there. It's completely useless if everything ends on this call alone…and even if anything happens, Lord Monaghan will deal with it appropriately."

"This is different from what was agreed on! We're just in charge of searching, and the rest—"

"Captain, this is the next objective given to the "Wind Assembly"."

The firm voice caused Hohky's expression to change. This man had no ambitions, and just wanted to just have a peaceful life in the military and wait for his retirement funds to arrive. What misstep did he take to be dragged into the "Wind's Assembly"? Perhaps it was when the superior officer taking care of him invited him to the study meet, and he was gradually involved in it. However, the "Wind's Assembly" did not assign its important members around for show. If Hohky intended to let this once in a blue moon opportunity slip away, there would be a need to drag him down from the Captain's seat. Gilligan stamped on the floor and let his body approach Hohky, whose legs were all limp with fear.

Think of how you could dislodge your peer and become a Captain. Did you think it's because of ability?"

"You bastard, you dare to be so insolent to your sup—"

"It's because you're a superior that I'm saying this. Please don't forget, that when we reveal the information to the "Sleeves", we're already straying off from our lives as Republic soldiers."

Since the past, the captain had been considered a god on the ship, someone with absolute authority; now, this captain is treated like this, but Hokhy's face was red for only an instant. His widened eyes suddenly lost strength, and his shoulders slumped, seemingly having given up, and looked away, ostensibly unable to think of anything else to say. *What a pitiful man.* Gilligan did not want to waste any time chastising this man, left the Captain's seat, and floated his body to the window in front.

"The Musai Kai-class "Gulltoppr" bridge was constructed not too differently from the original old Republic ship, the Musai-class. It was a

simple bridge with a large window typical of the current Minovsky Era, and all the functions could be gathered on this one floor. This extremely sturdy plastic window that was 2m wide and no less than 8m in length was at this point showing the ships of the Chivvay-class heavy training ships, and the navigation lights of the fleet flagship “Bifrest” could be seen further in front. It was impossible to see from this point, but there was a Chivvay-class training ship behind the “Gulltoppr”, and the “Dromi”, also of the Musai Kai-class, was acting as the vanguard. They were in a packed linear formation, surrounding the training ship; this was a basic formation in a offshore space training. In space, the distance of 2km would pass easily, so they had to watch each other’s position to prevent the rear ships from crashing into the front. The ships slowed down do to the unexpected change in course, and the rookies on the training ship were starting to decode the beacon signal.

The guards fleet commander on the flagship “Bifrest” was one of the few survivors of the space mothership “Doros” that was sunk during the War. He was one of the adults in the Republic after the War, but could not help but keep thinking of aligning with Neo Zeon because of his family, and would keeping delving into knowledge every single day, unlike the ambitiuous Hohky. Whether Hohky would accept this command or not, the fleet would disperse immediately, and the “Bifrest” will lead the two other Chivvay-class ships in training. The “Gulltoppr” and the “Dromi” would then take individual action, and what they were about to face would be a sea of real battle, where a single mistake would cost them their lives. Gilligan inhaled through his nose and suppressed the burning sensation in his heart and stepped off the floor. He saw the window show his reflection before he locked, and the uniform of the Republic army he had been used to suddenly felt revolting.

This collared uniform was designed in the same fashion as the Federation army, only that its colors were of Zeon colors, thick green colors, a uniform that felt annoying to him. The old Principality’s uniform that was full of Zeon flair in the past was removed, and the current Republic only had soldiers with this getup. This felt so cheap compared to the “Sleeves” that emphasized so much on their dress code—the elegant Neo Zeon uniform. This current uniform he was wearing was rid of the Principality’s flair; they hoped to start afresh, but after 16 years, nothing started. In the name of revival, they accepted one-sided peace treaties, killed off their souls, wore these uniforms, and was so pitiful that they had no honor and pride left.

If this was the proper way of being a Republic’s soldier, there would be

no value in walking down this path. Deviating slightly from this path would allow them to live like real warriors. Gilligan crossed through the bridge, and descend from the hatch on the floor down to the deck below. The side of Captain Hohky's face showed no signs of looking back at him, and overlapped with the face of Gilligan's father, an advocate of anti-war, which made him even unhappier.

Part 4[edit]

The Republic's army was not allowed to move outside side 3, their own country's territory, but there were exceptions. Such exceptions included offshore space navigation. The training ships that came along were used to ferry new recruits, and the 2 weeks trip around the Earth Celestial sphere was the best chance for the guards fleet ships to get familiar with the technology. There were 4 such trainings each year, and this would be the 45th offshore trip ever since the Republic was created. Thus, the group called the 45th training fleet left from the port of their native area, got the top secret classified report from the "Wind's Assembly" as they were about to pass by between Earth and the Moon, 2 days after they left.

It was not a coincidence that the two escort Chivvay-class ships and the 3 Musai-Kai class ships, "Bifrest", "Gulltoppr" and "Dromi" had members of the "Wind's Assembly on them". This organization was said to have thousands, or even ten thousand members, and they were gathered on specific ships; their main priority would be to defend the fleet during its offshore training. The directive of the chairman was that they needed to learn skills for surfing through the space regions far away, to see the expansive world, but if there was a need, they could act on their own as a battalion.

Just as I wanted, Gilligan thought. The headquarters of the "Wind's Assembly" was commanded to search for the "Mock Wooden Horse"—Londo Bell's "Nahel Argama". There was no specific reason, but if this was a joint operation with the "Sleeves", it would definitely have something to do with the mysterious events happening the past month. This 'just in case' situation had finally arrived; no matter what it was, the premonition that something big was going to happen strongly drove the enthusiasm of Gilligan and the young members.

After the War, the Principality was subjected to release and execute all the important officials involved with the Zabi family, and they were practically focused to put their foreheads on the ground to beg the Federation for forgiveness. This however was not enough, and the history that followed was etched deeply into his heart, how they offered an entire city to the hungry Federation army, allowing them to go on a

wanton rampage defiling women and children, turning him into a member of the Republic's army. The authority that protected the nation by doing this was this hollow, and the Republic army under the control of the Federation had no authority at all. The Republic army was an army that was suddenly created by the Federation, who once wanted the Republic to disarm themselves, and now, the Federation intended to use them to suppress the Zeon remnants. Their defense directive to open fire before they were attacked hinted that these people were to endure a minimum amount of sacrifice. Even so, the nation never showed signs of regret sacrificing people after the war. The existence of the military itself was against the constitution, and this hint still remained deeply rooted in the Republic government calling itself a peaceful nation.

By deeming an independent war as a crime and abandoning the constitution by deeming it a war without any approval, this ended up bringing about emptiness to the country itself. The Republic soldiers were deemed as petty thieves, and it was a taboo of them to even wear their uniforms and walk down the streets in their country. *Those who can endure such a situation aren't worthy of being called warriors. If we're children who don't know about war, the adults are the ones who created this situation where they forget about their pride. They said that they willing become the puppets of the Federation by having a hundred year nation rebuilding plan, but accepted the return of self-autonomy in the year UC 0100 so easily, and said that returning their autonomy was due to the times. The adults kept delaying the issues, and their decisions could only cause adults to make the wrong step, ridding the people of its future.*

This was what the "Wind's Assembly" told them. The sponsr behind this organization, Defense Minister Monaghan Baharov turned the issues these youth had since young into words. While studying at the National Defense College, Gilligan took part in in an essay competition, was selected, got involved with the "Wind's Assembly", and his meeting with Monaghan became everything in his life.

Monaghan would act as a puppet politician for the Federation, but secretly described the new world order of his ideals, and told Gilligan that the "Wind's Assembly" was to be the forefront. That amazingly extraordinary thinking made Gilligan want to start up for him. While the "Sleeves" led by the Second Coming of Char continued to act as Zeon's ghost, Monaghan and his men would continue to hide in the Republic's army until that day arrived. This thinking brought meaning to his training and endurance that was never repaid; he got some self-respect he could take solace in, and started studying inside the

departments seriously.

Those who sacrifice their time as ordinary youths are to train themselves to be soldiers, ready to defend the country, so that they can get the mission to correct the country. Gilligan repeated Monaghan's words in his heart again, affirmed that this moment had come, and let his feet move from the bridge and turn to the mobile suit deck. The Musai Kai-class cruiser had an appearance of an old flatiron, and the mobile suit deck was located right at the bottom of the bridge, at the back of the ship that was the handle. The deck space was a narrow and long cylinder, they could only put the machines on the ceiling and the floor. There were 4 units of RMS-106 "Hizack" that belonged to the Gulltoppr fleet, and two of them were facing each other.

The "HiZack" was developed from the "Zaku" of the old Principality, the ancestor of all mobile suits, and it was developed as a second generation machine, widely known for being adopted for use by the Federation after the War. At this point, it was considered an old mobile suit of the same line as the "Zaku", and was even sold as toy machines to civilians, but the Republic continued to use this as its main force. The Federation, which upgraded its equipment, left a large remainder to the Republic; they were in a state where they were still fresh from the factories, and it was a hint that they had to repaint these mobile suits with Zeon colors again.

In the end, the mobile suits lying on the deck were white "Hizacks" that were not practical for actual combat, but the monoeyed heads were still a symbolism of Zeonism, showing a ferocity the GM-types never had. It was never overly stated, but the reason why the Federation kept scrapping the production of the monoeyed type and even swapped out some for the goggle-type was because they wanted to break away from the Zeon designs. Gilligan thought as he lifted his head to look at his customer "Hizack". "What's the matter, leader?" he heard this voice, looked behind, and saw the pilots and mechanics of the Gultoppr moving through the zero gravity deck as they gathered at him.

"What's the content of the received code?" "Are we going to sortie?" The subordinates asking this were showing flushed faces. Gilligan looked around at all these people who too endured the subjugation and were about to be the basis for the new Zeon Principality, and answered them with a smile. A whistle rang, and someone yelled, "DAMN, WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS!" a celebratory atmosphere soon devoured everyone, and Gilligan raised his hand to stop everyone,

“Our ship will track down and observe the “Mock Wooden Horse”. We just need to hang on until the main forces of the “Sleeves” arrive, but the mobile suit squadron can launch in this situation. Don’t neglect your preparations; our “Wind’s Assembly” is assigned to this offshore mission for this purpose. There’re still 4 years till the time we have to return our autonomy, and we have to become a wind to strengthen the fervor of the people, to save the forgotten Zeon zeal and our country that’s on the brink of collapse.”

Gilligan’s body floated in zero gravity, and everyone inadvertently bought their heels together. However, the tense looks on the subordinates’ faces showed that they understood their roles as the vanguards. He looked around at everyone again, and said and smiled, “If we want to ride the wind and fly, we need wings.” He took out a mantle that was folded neatly from inside his clutches, and opened it in front of the surprised group.

The black cloth had a golden rank sewn on it, mimicking the appearance of a wing. This was the mantle used by the cadres of the old Principality. The crowd let out oohs as they widened their eyes, “It’s the 3rd battle outfit!” “The real thing?” voices rang, and Gilligan answered, “There’s one for everyone.” He put on the Lieutenant’s mantle and hung the wing-shaped crest in front of his chest. “In the future, all officers are to wear the mantle, and the soldiers are to change into the prepared 3rd uniform. This is the will of the chairman.”

The mechanic answered to the keyword as he moved the cardboard box of mantles here. This was something the leader of the “Wind’s Assembly” prepared ‘just in case’. Gilligan looked on at the cheering subordinates who came fighting for the clothing like bait, and showed a wry smile as he looked at his machine pleased at the ceiling. The RMS-106CS “Hizack Custom” legs were larger, giving it a more stable impression than an ordinary “Hizack”. From this place, he could see the blade antenna of a commander at the top, and could see himself being reflected off the visor protecting the monoeye.

He looked up at the direct descendent of the “Zaku” series as he put on the mantle that reached his waist. If possible, he hoped to have a Principality’s peaked cap, but he could not ask for too much. This was the real him, the pride he finally could get after living for 28 years—the intoxication of arrogance numbed his body as he clenched the fist placed on his chest.

Part 5[edit]

The gate to the deck was opened, and the sounds of the reports and alarms that rang through the machine vanished as the only thing that

could be heard was the sound of the generator. Angelo let his body submerge in the silence of space as his fingers rest on the ball grip, and lifted his stare to look at the pitch darkness on the other side of the gate. (Path is clear. Frontal squadron, please launch.) The report from the bridge rang.

(Captain, there's a response from Tenisun's fleet hiding in Side 6. They can catch up to the "Mock Wooden Horse" in one or two days. There's no need to make a move first, is there?)

After the operator's voice rang, Ship captain Hill's voice echoed in the helmet. It had been 30 minutes since they received the information from the Republic earlier than expected, and decided to send the mobile suit squad for attack. Ship captain Hill had been advising against this operation all this time, and even at this point, but in fact, he was worried that there might be some mishap that may happen to Frontal. *It's cute that you're worried to this extent.* Angelo noted wryly. (Something might happen during this 1, 2 days.) Frontal said with a wry tone.

(The fleet commander of Londo Bell, Bright is supporting the "Mock Wooden Horse". If he's the one giving the commands, he probably has a plan to secure the "Box". In this phase, a day's difference is a lot.)

(Is that so…)

(This might be a showdown. I'll end things before the "Rewloola" reaches.)

Frontal cut off the communication line on his side, and the "Sinanju" lined its feet on the catapult. The red machine with a beam rifle, shield and bazooka on its waist leaned forward. (Full Frontal, "Sinanju", launching.) The nonchalant voice rang, and the tremor of the catapult being activated shook the deck; the machine with the wing-like thruster unit shot out of the hatch, and the "Sinanju" disappeared from the mobile suit deck. Angelo stepped on the pedal, and let the "Rozen Zulu" move forward without waiting for the catapult to return back to its original position.

The feet of the "Rozen Zulu" had the unique shape of high heeled shoes, and it could not fit onto the catapult either way. Angelo let the machine lean towards the gate nearby, and glanced at the deck crew waving the conducting bar, before looking at the wide space in front of the deck. *This might be a showdown*—he repeated Frontal's words in his heart, and exerted strength into his stomach.

"Angelo Sauper, "Rozen Zulu", launching!"

The thrusters installed on the shoulders and waist armor let out flares, and the purple machine, which was designed based on a rose, was surrounded by light. The catapult deck that reached the bow of the ship immediately slid by from below, and the “Rozen Zulu” danced in the void. With the red “Rewloola” behind, he pursued the “Sinanju” that was moving far in front. The latter did not activate the main thrusters on its back, but used two, three restrained burst to negate the inertia, and fluidly approached the 4 shackles on standby.

The shackles were a SFS similar to the “Clogs” used by the Federation, and it was used for mobile suits long distance travel. Right now, it had two large booster rockets, and the tips of the 50m long rods were attached to the oval machines. Angelo interrupted his momentum and let the “Rozen Zulu” land on the second unit. Once the machine knelt down and landed on the platform, the hook-shaped finger grips latched on. At this moment, two “Geara Zulus” of the escort squad launched from the “Rewloola”, and landed on the 3rd and 4th shackle units.

The newly sortied Second Lieutenant Rakker and Ensign Reiru were here to replace Sergi and Cuarón who died in battle. They had exceptional skills as pilot, but could their “Geara Zulu” catch up to the capabilities of this “Rozen Zulu”. As Angelo thought about this, (Angelo), Frontal’s voice suddenly rang, and Angelo hurriedly looked at the first shackle.

(What I told Ship captain Hill was true. We’ll settle everything regarding the “Laplace Box” this time.)

“Right…!”

(The pilot of the “Unicorn Gundam” is gradually awakening into a powerful Newtype. When there’s a battle, I’ll have to rely on your “Rozen Zulu”. Be prepared.)

These unexpected words caused him to be short of breath. In the past, Frontal had never said anything about being prepared. He always fought for himself, and this Captain, who never required any assistance, was actually asking Angelo for help. He fully showed the fear in him, his true feelings to Angelo.

Banagher Links has become a really powerful opponent. Angelo felt a chill pass through, but a more intense emotion rose from deep within him. “Yes!” he answered and sat upright in the cockpit. Just when he was feeling anxious about being unable to be more affectionate, (All units, correct your course. 10 seconds till the boosters light up.) the voice of the Shackle pilot rang, 9, 8, 7…the countdown through the

wireless. After seeing the “Sinanju” ride on Shackle unit 1 as it flapped the wings on back, Angelo closed his eyes and let the body ride on the momentum of the boosters.

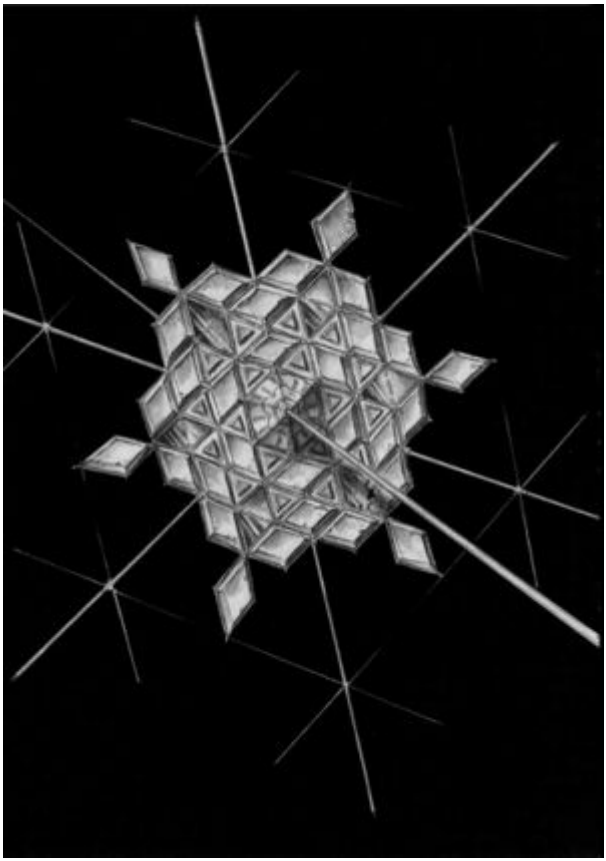
The spotless, pure white fabric appeared in his eyes. The white blanket appeared deep within his memories. Angelo was once stained by blood, dung and urine, but this blanket was purified by Frontal’s ‘power’. He pursued Frontal, believed in him, and viewed the latter as part of him for 3 years, which negated the corruption that had stained him for the past 10 years or so. He did not have any regrets left, and he was already mentally prepared. The grace of being saved could only be repaid by saving him back.

“If it’s for you, wherever you go—”

The flash and the buzzing of the boosters erased the following words. The 4 Shackles fired forward like bullets as they drag long and thick trails of light. Angelo endured the G-Force rattling on him, and looked at the space through his narrowed eyes. The Shackle ferrying the “Sinanju” let out a tremendous light on rockets, ostensibly devouring the surrounding stars.

Part 6[edit]

The central core module had thickness, but the panels of the solar generator expanded around it were just a thin layer, and when viewed from afar, it looked like a sheet of glass giving off white light. The panel was made of numerous triangular and rhombuses, creating a tessellation that was almost the shape of a hexagon; there were 6 warning lights flashing, reaching out from all corners. The “L1 junction” felt like…or rather, it was designed in the form of a snowflake; its shape was no longer that of a lighthouse, but something similar to an art piece. Including the pillars of the warning lights, the maximum diameter was 2km, and it could be said to be the most expansive art piece humanity used its public expenses for.



There were 5 Lagrange Points formed between the Earth and the Moon, and each Lagrange Point had such a landmark set. This could be said to be the first stronghold of humanity in space beside the first space station sent into Earth's orbit. Before the Universal Century began, humanity used these light towers to ascertain their positions, and crossed through this wide and endless space. In space, where every item would float away, and even the colonies relative positions continued to change, it was an artificial item that had an absolute position compared to the Earth and the Moon. The light and electrowaves released from it were the materials that allowed people to proceed with their work without worry—until the discovery of Minovsky Particles that thoroughly overturned the reliability of electricity.

Because of the advancement in space navigation technology, there were no ships that would use light towers as landmarks. Its existence had long been wasted; the light tower at L5 was wrecked in the war, and it was said that it was never rebuilt. The 'L1 Junction' flickering in front of their eyes had only an occasional patrol from the space colony association, and the people situated there had long evacuated. They

set up an empty temporary pier to allow any ships that were involved in accidents to dock, but they probably could not use it in this situation. It let out a beautiful glow, but one could see that the 'L1 Junction' shown on the expanded main screen was completely desolate. "Another junk…" Liam muttered with a sigh as she witnessed the same thing.

"Is this Cardeas Vist's interest? Whether it's the relic of "Laplace" or here."

"Places with hidden treasures are typically the ones most likely to be forgotten."

In stories. Otto added in his heart as he gave a wry smile. Liam glanced at him, and argued back wordlessly that it was reality. He understood, but it could not be helped. The current reality was that the coordinates indicated by the Laplace Program was directed at this 'L1 Junction'. Otto again looked at the space tower that was almost 5,000km away. Even though its parts showed signs of erosion after many years of being placed here, but the construct that symbolized a snowflake did not change its impression as a huge art piece. This impression made it look like it was very suitable for hiding treasure, but was also mystifying to a point where it could not be described.

The remnant of the Prime Minister's Residence "Laplace", the capital Dakar, and now the 3rd location; were things going to end after 3 times, or—*Otto ceased all useless thoughts and looked at the sensor on his left. "Are there any ships around us?" he asked this question for the umpteenth time. "Just like 10 minutes ago." The sensor operator answered rhythmically.*

"There's a trading ship moving on the same path within a radius of 5,000km, and there's a cruiser and a shuttle going in the opposite way."

"Even if there's a civilian signal released, don't get careless. We were had on "Laplace" because of this. Don't look away from the ship you set sight on."

"Understood." Upon hearing this reply, Otto looked back at the main screen. "Even though the enemy back then is our ally now." Otto muttered to himself, and felt Liam give him a meaningful look. "Captain…" she muttered. "I know." But Otto interrupted what she wanted to say next.

"I received a report from the supervisors. I'm very concerned that they're too comfy, but there's no actual proof, so we can only hold our horses here."

He was talking about Zinnerman and the rest of the “Garencieres” team. They were not intending to interact enthusiastically, but seemed content with taking a step back and observing. They were definitely unable to hide their doubts about how things were developing, and had a natural reaction. It seemed that they did not have any motives at this point, but it was a fact that the Neo Zeon soldiers that totaled to more than 30 were not restrained, and were allowed to move freely in the ship. “Is that so…” Liam’s voice had some doubt it it.

“Whether it’s good or fact, the fact is that we let things develop like this. I don’t want to detain them at this moment and revert everything back to how it was. Let’s bet on those two.”

Otto look past Ensign Mihiro, who was at the communication console, and looked at the ship monitor showing the mobile suit deck as he said that in a voice only Liam could hear. The Zeonic-styled “Geara Zulu” and the ReZEL with the Federation goggles were lined together; they did not feel like they matched no matter how they looked. There was a 94-type Base Jabber at the factory block in the middle of the deck, and two “Lotos” in tank-form that were fastened down on the platform along it. The ECOAS members and the mechanics on the ships were working on fastening it down, and the white machine frame of the “Unicorn” stood behind them silently as Banagher and Mineva stood on the gondola built beside the cockpit. They were both in pilot suits, and were about to head into the cockpit of the “Unicorn”.

Conroy and Zinnerman were both standing on the same gondola, their arms folded as they looked at the pair. Banagher wanted to let Mineva come along with him as he head out to the ‘L1 Junction’ for investigations, and his insistence was that since Mineva had already abandoned Neo Zeon and rode on this ship, she should have the privilege to go along. The adults nodding away however had their own ideas; the ECOAS and Garencieres team were not looking at each other on the monitor as they flanked the pair, signifying the hideous atmosphere on the “Nahel Argama” at this point.

People are beings who got reconciliation through countless trials…let’s hope this is one of them.

Otto muttered what Bright said. “All inspectors, no change in the launching plans. Take note of the final destination.” Mihiro’s voice of a seasoned operator rang, causing the vague atmosphere in the bridge to become a little tense.

Part 7[edit]

“…That’s why, since it’s designed for Newtype-use, this guy’s thrust

power is not just for smooth maneuverability. It will be a little heavier, but your skills will make up for it."

Takuya said as he showed the 3 sided printout. He was dressed in overalls with the logo of the Nahel Argama on it, saying some ostensibly complicated thing, and looked just like a real mechanic. There was nowhere else to run on the gondola, and Banagher retreated to the cockpit hatch at the side. "Talking about my skills? You haven't seen them at all." He pouted as he said. "But I did read through the battle logs." Takuya however argued back, not wanting to lose.

"I've read the logs about battles like the ones against the Red Comet or the aerial battle against Unit 02. Your testimony can't be used for reference since you're so immature, but this educational computer of the "Unicorn" has a complete log about it. I've researched through it and thought of this enhancement here. It's called the "Full Armor Unicorn"!"

The blueprint flashed in front of Banagher's eyes again had an outline of the "Unicorn" with lots of portable weapons on it. Banagher did think of how to handle the heavier machine and increase the output accordingly, but the blueprint simply looked like a child's doodling, and only felt like they were loaded with powerful machines. He glanced aside at Audrey, who looked ready to burst into laughter, and then turned to look at the mechanic officer Gibney above the cockpit cover. "Mr Gibney, this apprentice mechanic wants to modify the "Unicorn" on his own will!" In response, Gibney merely shook his muscular back as he let out laughter.

"I've seen it too, and it's actually quite balanced. How about you try it out as a friend?"

"Don't joke around."

"Eh, please. I'll only use what we have, and it'll be over after 20 minutes in the construction block, alright?"

Takuya however won't take part this blueprint. "No way." Banagher pushes it back.

"And I'm not going out for battle this time. My hands will be full because of this plan, right? It'll be hard to carry out the investigation."

"That's why we need to rely on your skills."

He smiled and patted on Banagher's shoulder, his expression causing the latter to sigh. "Seriously you…" As Banagher placed his hands on his waist, another voice came, "Hold it, Takuya! Restrain yourself

there!” This voice caused Banagher and Takuya to look back in unison.”

“Didn’t we agree not to interfere with what Banagher does yesterday?”

Micott said as she held the dinner boxes in her hands, balancing herself. It seemed that she sensed this commotion when the food was given out. *So it’s already this time?* Banagher looked at the watch hidden inside the glove, “But I’m not getting in his way.” and Takuya argued back with a vague voice.

“I’m doing this for Banagher’s sake…”

“Why aren’t you looking at me in the eyes…is Mr. Gibney being too nice to you? To think that he allows an apprentice to design a blueprint.”

“Is that so?” Gibney chuckled as he grabbed the dinner box that was thrown to him. Banagher looked at Takuya and Micott, who had already involved themselves into the atmosphere of the bridge well, and again felt that they were in a different realm on their own…a complicated sense of comfort and loneliness rose in his heart. “There’s no need for this since Banagher’s going to move now, right?” Micott asked. “Yeah, um. I ate already.” Banagher answered, but a sense of melancholy caused him to look away.

“…You too, Miss Audrey?”

Micott stare turned behind Banagher, ostensibly not realizing it herself. Audrey seemed to be stumbling in her words, “Oh, thank you.” but did not look unnatural, and Micott smiled back, not showing any signs of malice on her face. “Do your best!” Micott winked as she left the scene, while Takuya kept his blueprint and left the cockpit together with her. Banagher suddenly felt abandoned and scratched his nose that was not feeling itchy.

“Such great friends.”

Audrey said as she watched them leave. “Is that so?” Banagher turned his head around with a wry look, and accidentally spotted her dressed in a Federation pilot suit. A pilot suit demands more ease of maneuverability, and this pilot suit showed the figure of the wearer. Banagher kept staring at her, and realized that her body figure was unexpectedly nice. “I’m envious.” Audrey said as she approached him.

“I did not have any friends I could talk with like this.”

She whispered, and returned to her original position before he could see her face. She did not mind too much about Banagher, who did not

react in time, and floated towards the “Geara Zulu” docked by the side, ostensibly want to talk about something with Zinnerman over there. Zinnerman, who interrupted his conversation on the unit’s information with the ship’s mechanic, turned to Audrey, and would turn an occasional glance at Banagher. For some reason, Banagher felt a sense of guilt as he did not look back, and hid inside the cockpit.

He checked that the assistance seat was pulled out for Audrey to sit on, and sat down on the linear seat. “But I’m here.” The words he failed to convey to Audrey in time repeated in his heart. *No, it’s different from being an ordinary friend. I don’t want to end things just by being ordinary friends…as he started thinking about this, the light shining in through the hatch suddenly dulled. Banagher lifted his head to see Conroy’s hulking figure standing outside the hatch.*

Conroy did not let out any voices as he agilely poked his head into the cockpit unbefitting of his large frame, and approached with a stern expression. At the same time, he brought something in his clutches to Banagher, causing the latter to hear his heart jump loudly.

“…What?”

His stare was attracted by the automatic handgun with a black glow, and he then turned his face to Conroy. “Take this just in case.” Conroy whispered and handed it together with the holster.

“Just in case…”

“We ECOAS will be heading forth to investigate, and the defenses on the “Nahel Argama” will weaken. If anything happens, you’re the only one who can stop them.”

Conroy said each word slowly and carefully as he looked at the hangar at the side of the all-view monitor. Banagher understood that there was the “Geara Zulu”, Zinnerman and company, and suddenly felt his eyesight darken.

“You want me to use Audrey as a hostage?”

There was a wordless reply. “But this…!” Banagher suddenly interrupted violently, “Just in case.” But Conroy interrupted him with a firm voice.

“Lieutenant Zinnerman understands very well. Same goes for Captain Otto. If not, Princess Mineva won’t be coming along to investigate.”

This was completely beyond what Banagher imagine. He thought that the reason why they allowed Audrey to come along and investigate the “Box” was because she had the right to, but he did not think that this

was to take a hostage to seal the actions of the Garencieres, or whether Zinnerman understood this—Banagher did not feel as betrayed as he was embarrassed by how he did not realize this, and lowered his head wordlessly. “Just treat it as a rule.” Conroy’s voice echoed blankly in this ball-shaped cockpit.

“It’ll take stages before adults can trust each other fully. No fool will give a large sum of money they don’t know of unless there’s a guarantor.”

“This sort of thing…”

“I understand how you feel. I want to see things like a Newtype too, but __”

Conroy suddenly stopped what he was saying midway through, and his body froze for a moment as he looked behind. Banagher too lifted his head, looked over Conroy’s shoulders, and exchanged looks with the figure standing behind. Audrey looked somewhat surprised as she moved her face away from the hatch, “Sorry for interrupting your conversation.” and wanted to leave. “No, it’s fine.” Conroy however answered as he gave a different composed look at Audrey, stuffing the handgun into Banagher’s hands.

“You’ve finished all you wanted to say, right?”

His face was smiling, but the smile could not hide the murderous intent in his expression. Banagher grabbed the gun and stuffed it in the gap between the back and the linear seat. Just like this, Conroy left the cockpit; he looked in from through the hatch, and turned away, wanting to move away. “Lieutenant Commander Conroy.” Audrey, who was standing at the hatch, called to the person that was about to leave.

“Have you heard of the term lingering thoughts?”

Conroy’s body froze for a moment, “Lingering…thoughts?” and asked back as his eyes blinked for no apparent reason. Audrey took a step towards him.

“Mr. Aaron said that if the Psycommu has the strength to gather people’s wills, it can work beyond the boundaries of life and death. In other words, the wills of humans that are not certain to be dead have the possibility of being used by the “Unicorn”.”

Conroy must have felt that these words were beyond his expectations. “Of course, these are baseless hypotheses.” Audrey however smiled as she continued.

“But if you think of it this way, you can understand why the “Unicorn”

can increase in power at such an abnormal rate. This machine absorbs the lives of those related to it, and bind us together. Banagher's father, the Neo Zeon soldiers, and definitely, the man who sacrificed his life to protect Banagher, Commander Daguza Mackle's soul,…"

She said this as she looked up at the lone horn of the "Unicorn". Banagher looked at the side of her face. Her expression showed that ths ewas already aware of the thoughts the adults around them had, but even so, she never showed despair; she must not show despair, and act as the role people expected her to be. Conroy's stunned expression recovered somewhat as he brought his feet together, showing respect in his eyes. To a soldier like him, words that respect his dead commander would be the greatest compliment to him. Banagher felt the warmth of humans in this unknown machine called the "Unicorn", and felt an inkling of redemption. He looked at Audrey sidelong, and though she was smiling, her expression was somewhat dull as she watched Conroy leave, causing Banagher to recall the gloom she had for the past few days.

The occasion gloom she showed was not just she was fatigued about the role she had to play. He called her to join him while wanting to know the truth behind it, but did not expect things to end up like this— he closed his eyes and bit his lips, deciding that he must not let her discover the handgun as that hard foreign rested on his back.

Part 8[edit]

It was a large ship beyond common sense, but the mobile suit deck of the "General Revil" was not so wide that it was jaw-dropping. Whether it was the high of 7 levels, or the size that allowed it to contain a dozen mobile suits, it was still about the same size as the "Nahel Argama" deck. This could even be considered smaller than the one on the "Ra Cailum", but the decisive difference this ship had compared to the rest was that it had 4 of such mobile suit decks.

4 platoons, 48 mobile suits were docked in their respective decks, and each platoon had their own territories, ranging from the resupply deliveries to their daily lives. This 3rd deck was the territory of the Clifford platoon, and the 12 Jegan-types were kept in the deck, 6 machines on both sides on the deck facing each other, but Riddhe did not recognize the faces and names of their pilots.

Dressed in the black pilot suit, he deliberately isolated himself because of his falsified history; there was no reason for him to get along with the pilots on the same deck, and nobody in particular was willing to go all the way out just to talk to him. He experienced this atmosphere on the "Ra Cailum" before, but the anxiety and sense of isolation he felt

on this ship was far beyond the days he spent on Earth, making the latter a piece of cake. His body was tired from the training, and he leaned on the railing of the catwalk as he looked at the one existence that had any relation to him at this point. The black machine “Banshee” stood at the hangar, and the lone golden horn was the only thing reflecting light as it stood at a corner of the deck as it remained as a non-regiment unit in the corner of the deck.

“The horn can be viewed as a highly powerful and polar radar that can detect the enemy’s Psycowaves. Once the machine detects the existence of a Psycommu machine, the horn will split apart to form blade antennas to become a highly mobile state used for combat…the Destroy mode. The one controlling its activation here is the NT-D, and this is a common specification for the Unicorn-type, but the system for Unit 01 was obviously activated. This is probably caused by the Laplace Program Cardeas installed. Looking at the current records, the “Unicorn” NT-D will scan not only the outside, but also the pilot inside. Once it senses the Psycowaves of the pilot instead, it will activate its Gundam-system. In this sense, it isn’t the original Newtype destroyer, but a subform of what we should call the Newtype-Drive system.”

Alberto’s voice from before echoed, and Riddhe’s fatigued head started to ache. He grabbed onto the handrail tightly, and stared at the black machine he still could not pilot.

The Psycommu system’s agility increases drastically with the co-activation of the Psycoframe. In the past, the Psycommu transfers the thought waves into digital data and handles them, but the Unicorn-type Psycoframes can receive the Psycowaves of the pilot even under vague situations. Simply put, it can receive the Psycowaves before the pilot thinks or says out…even the murmuring of the pilot, and react according. Due to the extremely intrinsic calculations of the system, the Unicorn-type can even interfere with the enemy’s Psycommus and control weapons like funnels. However, the problem is that the massive calculations will be a burden to the pilot’s head. You have heard of the corrosion effect when the Psycommu system is in place. A Cyber-Newtype can forcefully clear out a part of their brain as an empty area, and in theory, it is possible to have a man-machine interface, but an ordinary person can’t do this. The Psycowaves amplified by the Psycommu will form a tremendous pressure on the pilot once it flows back into the head. The antagonistic intent and fear will expand to a point where it can’t be handled and would affect the pilot’s mental state…a strong fear will control the pilot, and sometimes, even cause the system to malfunction.”

The downside to controlling a machine that could be controlled like the

pilot's limbs was that the pilot had to endure the stress on the machine. Thus, Cyber-Newtypes would deliberately leave openings in their mental state…this was what Alberto was going, that humans were too complicated that they could not be synchronized with the machine. It would be better to keep the instincts that would trigger the sixth sense, and remove all other aspects of the soul. This was what the Newtype Research Facility concluded.

Of course, this was a bone-chilling topic. The researchers who would make such a conclusion, the technicians who created the system were both traitors to humanity; but though Riddhe agreed with the notion that they were traitors, it did not matter to him as he wanted that power. it had been 3 days since he started training to familiarize himself, but the "Banshee" still would not get in sync with him. Despite managing to activate the NT-D in the mock simulations, he could not trigger the expected mobility, and even till this point, he did not experience this high mobility that was like instantaneous movement. This may be a machine built for Cyber-Newtypes, but he could not use that as an excuse. In fact, Banagher activated the NT-D in his first battle and piloted the "Unicorn Gundam".

According to Alberto, Banagher was swallowed by the system several times in the beginning, and nearly lost control of himself. However, he had learnt how to control the system completely. Riddhe would experience this power of the controlled "Unicorn" the moment he clash with Banagher directly. *How did that boy, who never hid his feelings, get such a power? How do I beat him? Do I need a strong will that can control the system and a firm heat? The source of his vigor, that thing shining from deep within the eyes is—*

"You're too tense."

At that instant, a familiar voice rang in his ears, causing Riddhe to freeze. He knew who the voice belonged to, took a breath to get ready, and turned his breath.

"Your soul and body are too tense. It's rare to see someone with impressive abilities like yours, but this is really a waste."

Nigel said the exact same thing he said before as he approached on the narrow catwalk. Riddhe had thought the Tri-stars were in another deck, and did not worry that they would meet, but it was too late to ignore Nigel at this distance as he brought his feet together. Nigel scanned all over Riddhe from head to toe, stopped at the Vist Foundaiton logo on the pilot suit chest, "So you're the pilot of the second unit?" and smiled as he said this.

“The man who should be receiving direct orders from the Senate Council is now the personal pilot of the Vist Foundation…that’s quite a vagrant life you have there, Ensign Riddhe.”

“Is there anything, Lieutenant Nigel?”

“it’s nothing, just that we meet on the same ship. It’s okay to come over and greet, is it not?”

The inscrutable smile and the inexplicable stare were looking back at Riddhe’s face, no different from how it was on the “Ra Cailum”. Riddhe was reminded of the time he was shamed on Earth as he faced that stare, and looked away, trying to find some place he could look at on the deck below. However, Nigel did not seem to mind as he walked towards Riddhe, and his hulking figure in the grey officer uniform rest on the handrail.

“Looks like you’re not enhanced yet.”

Nigel’s probing stare looked as though it could see through Riddhe’s faltering heart as he said with a doubtfully teasing voice, causing the latter’s fists to tremble.

“That transport ship “Garencieres” was a decoy; we bit on it, and our mothership was sunk by the Red Comet”. Including our allied machines, more than 400 people were turned into space dust. If the higher-ups had revealed all the all the information, the outcome would be different.”

The end of those words was filled with cold spite. Riddhe turned his stare to the side of Nigel’s face.

“But it can’t be helped. Pilots can only do the best of what they could in such situations. I thought that you’re the same as us even though you’re commanded by the Senate Council directly, but it looks like I’m wrong.”

“…What does that mean?”

“I’m asking if you’ve lost sight of your current role as a pilot now. You became a pawn of the Foundation just to make up for some things you lack. A pilot with a normal brain will never think of riding such a monstrous machine. Even if you want to work with this ship, you should be here in the “Delta Plus”.”

Nigel looked down at the “Banshee” that was surrounded by the personnel related to the Foundaiton. Riddhe increased the strength on his grip.

“It’s the same thing when you think that you can’t beat the “Unicorn” without this. It’s not a pilot’s way of thinking to think that you can give up your heart just to win. I feel that I’m getting hot-headed over a paranoia-ridden brat now, no?”

“Even if you say that’s the case, so what?”

Riddhe felt the sharp pain hitting his chest, and his sense of rationality that was restraining himself not to answer was forgotten. Nigel however did not let Riddhe escape from his accidental slip of tongue, “This really annoys me.” He said with a forceful tone.

“I didn’t think I have such a guy in the same squad.”

“Just shoot me in the back if you want. I’ve done my best here. Even if our methods are different, there’s no reason for me to hear your grumblings.”

“Is selling your soul to a machine the best method?”

“A pilot isn’t exactly smart enough to care about everything else, right? We’re technically machines if we’re talking about it, machines hired to defeat the enemy, meant to eliminate Zeon—“

“THIS IS JUST AN EXCUSE!”

Nigel roared as he grabbed Riddhe by the shoulders, pulling the latter close. He used the railing to maintain a center of gravity, and in response to Nigel’s act, Riddhe floated, unable to resist.

“If there are no choices to choose, you can only use your brain to decide. This is something a pilot can do, and you now lost the ability to make the correct decision. What caused you to become like this? What are you—”

“It’s the “Unicorn”. I just want to beat it and prevent its secrets from being falling into Neo Zeon hands. Are you terrified of it too, Lieutenant?”

“What…?”

“You’re scared of the “Unicorn” too. You wanted to deny that you’re scared of it; that’s why you chased it into space. I understand your feelings, and it’s true that this is not a joke. This Newtype thing that has no basis of belief at all, denying my ability—”

A blunt sound rang, and Riddhe’s vision was tilted horizontally. He was hit, and the moment he realized this, he felt his head heat up at that instant as it hit the wall, and he bent his body.

He did not look at the blobs of blood floating in the air as he clenched his fist and kicked the wall. *Everyone's just saying whatever they want, trampling me below. You don't know anything at all, and I'm sick of such criticism.* He ignored the face that Nigel was a superior officer, and was about to swing his fist at the latter's face, "Hold it", however, someone called out, and at the next moment, the fist let out a blunt impact that hit the face.

The person who got between them stumbled in front of Nigel, the latter's eyes wide with shock. Alberto placed his hand on the wall and supported his body that was sent flying. "Goodness…" he muttered as he pressed on his redden cheek, shaking his head as he looked over at the dumbstruck Nigel, and then stared back at Riddhe. The latter did not understand what was going on as he blinked his eyes and looked at that thick fact.

"Please don't do such a thing, Lieutenant Nigel. It'll be troublesome if the personal pilot of the Foundation is here."

"…I think I'm the one who nearly got hurt here."

"You're planning to deliberately take the hit from the Ensign, charge him for insubordination, and pull him down from the "Banshee", right?"

Is that so? Riddhe never thought of this before, and Nigel did not look back at the suspecting look as he turned his troubled look aside.

"I understand now. You mean you're mentally prepared already? Ensign Riddhe, Mr. Alberto."

Alberto wiped away the blood that oozed from his mouth and showed that condescending smile from before. Nigel answered with a wry smile that lasted for less than a second, and looked at Riddhe wordlessly before leaving the scene. Once the long shoulder-length hair disappeared from the area, Alberto heaved a sigh of relief. "Why…" Riddhe clenched his hurting fist as he looked at Alberto's face sidelong and asked.

"It's just like what I said. We can't lose the pilot of the "Banshee" here."

Alberto stepped off the floor without turning back. "I don't want to take this punch for no good reason, so you better calm down." his figure drifted far away as he said this, and Riddhe felt the pain on his cheeks increasing, and the emotions he had been trying to suppress overwhelmed him, urging him to bawl.

Alberto and Nigel both looked like adults here, while Riddhe, who accumulated the urge he was unable to release, looked pathetic as he

continued to sulk alone. Shame and self-loathing exploded in him, “Hold it.” released in a form of words, and he suddenly let loose a line he did not think of a second ago,

“ENHANCE ME!”

Alberto, and even Riddhe himself was stunned. “Are you serious?” the former stopped and turned around to ask, and Riddhe affirmed it as he looked at Alberto in the eyes. *I can’t beat the “Unicorn” in this situation, and I can’t pilot the “Banshee” well. Instead of being embarrassed for being unable to do anything, I might as well*—the words driven by his impulse appeared in his heart as he gave a look showing that he was looking deep into his own heart, but he was stunned by Alberto’s sudden chortle.

“Don’t kid around. The enhancement of the mental state will turn the inferiority of the user into antagonistic intent. The you now will only end up on the path to self-destruction.”

“I just want to—”

“And if that were so convenient, I would have tried it myself. That is, if drugs and brainwashing alone is enough to enhance the soul.”

These unexpected words interrupted Riddhe, and Alberto turned his back on the former. “It’s really weird.” The self-depreciation voice came out, causing the buzz on the mobile suit deck to disappear in an instant.

“When I was about to die on the “Garuda”, I recalled. ‘I guess I can leave the future affairs of the Foundation to Banagher’…I certainly heard father say this more than 10 years ago.”

Father. This word entered Riddhe’s mind, and he recalled the unexpected relationship they had. If Alberto were the heir, the father would be Cardeas Vist, and if the former was the latter’s true son, he and Banagher would be—

“Ever since mom died of a heart attack, I was placed in a boarding school. I accidentally heard of these words when I returned home after graduating from university. I knew that father brought his mistress into the house, and that they had a child, but to a young man who had been learning to work in the Foundation, this was a huge shock to me.”

Did the relationship with Martha begin before then? Riddhe thought, but realized that this was not important, and looked away from Alberto. No matter what the reason was, this misstep broke the fragile relationship between father and son forever. Riddhe himself would

never be able to face his father properly again…

“But I forgot about this in the long run. I thought my hatred of my father was because he used his strong self as a basis, lacked care for the weak, and caused my mother to commit suicide. When I heard the name Banagher Links, I did not think he was anyone related to me until someone mentioned so. I probably sealed my memories unconsciously, just like he did. But my mind and body still remember. Thus, when I knew that father was about to give the “Box” away, I used my hands…”

Alberto stared at the hands raised to his chest and slowly clenched them. Riddhe, who had seen his covert operation on “Industrial 7”, was able to guess what Alberto used his hands to do. He felt an icy cold wind blow by, and looked at the back figure that had no one to rely on. “The memories I forgot completely remained rooted deep in my heart, and decided my present fate.” Albeto continued as he let his relaxed hand float aimlessly.

“And brainwashing of Cyber-Newtypes is an artificial way to do this, but this will not get us a strong will. Instead of thinking about such useless things, you’re better of getting used to the “Banshee”. What you and I need most now is the power to control the situation, and this can be obtained by beating the “Unicorn”. Make good use of your current position, and I’ll make good use of you.”

Alberto finished, and his figure kicked the floor as he truly disappeared from Riddhe’s eyes this time. The similarly red and swollen face disappeared past the door, and the atmosphere of isolation surrounded the catwalk. The alliance the Federation government and the Vist Foundation had for a hundred years was renewed in this generation, and Riddhe, who could only accept the current changing scenario, let his eyes drift towards the “Banshee” lying in a corner of the deck.

What he needed was the power to control the current situation…he had to take back what was taken from him, and affirm the power he chose. No matter what he chose, Mineva would never return to him, and he understood that well. But he told himself that his personal problems were different from the “Box”, and he continued to look at the black machine. As the pilot thought of trekking deeper into the abyss, the “Banshee” merely stared at the opposite wall with its emotionless face.

Part 9[edit]

(All hands, this is the Captain. We shall now head to the coordinates

indicated by the Laplace Program and investigate the “L1 Junction”. All investigation teams are to sortie in order, and all hands are to buck up in the anti-air supervision.)

Captain Otto’s voice rang through the open circuit, and the mobile suit deck start to draw out air. Banagher saw the ‘AIR’ on the display board turn red, (RX-0, please step onto the mobile suit deck. We’re awaiting good news from you, Banagher.), and then heard Mihiro’s voice. “Roger that.” He answered as he stepped on the pedal slightly.

The “Unicorn”, wielding the beam rifle on its right hand and the shield on its backpack, started to move forward as it left the hangar. It let the hooks on the feet sink into the deck indentation, and for every step it trudged forward, a quake-like rumbling reached the cockpit. Banagher sensed that Audrey, who was sitting on the assistance seat beside him, was a little tense, and there was an unnerving weight on the right foot as he pressed down on it, causing him to curl his lips. The automatic handgun Conroy gave him was stuffed in the right ankle holster. *it’s not wrong to say that this is a standard equipment for a pilot, but I wonder if Audrey will mind?* Banagher wanted to look over at the assistance seat on the right side, but sat Zinnerman and company standing in a corner of the deck, causing him to be unable to breath.

The man dressed in civilian normal suits brought in from the “Garencieres” was looking back at him from the catwalk with his black eyes—an insuppressible urge suddenly rose in Banagher, and he stopped the machine at the elevator leading to the deck. “Banagher?” Audrey called out, “I’ll be back.” but Banagher answered, opened the hatch, and leapt out of the cockpit.

“Captain!”

The air inside the hatch was sucked outside, and Banagher yelled out as he floated towards the catwalk. They were in the middle of moving out, and the noises were mixed around in the air. Even if Banagher called out loud, Zinnerman might not be able to hear him, but Banagher still did so, and the latter heard it. Zinnerman showed an ostensibly shocked expression for a moment, before backtracking away, and reached his arm over the railing to grab Banagher by the shoulder and pull him onto the catwalk. Banagher practically flew into Zinnerman’s clutches, and their helmets were touching each other’s.

“Thank you for believing in us, Captain.”

“Wha…what are you saying out of a sudden?”

“I feel that I haven’t thanked you properly…that’s all. Please keep watch here.”

For an instant, Zinnerman gave a stare through the visor that could see through someone else’s heart, and perhaps he had already seen how fidgety Banagher was within. He grabbed Banagher’s helmet with both hands, “We’re the one who need to request you.” This time, his bearded face closed in on Banagher, and the steady voice caused both helmets to vibrate.

“You have to come back. If the Princess gets even the slightest scratch, your life will be in peril.”

The black eyes were full of firm will, just like the stars above the African desert—those stars that would not boast about themselves, that would not guide their path as they continued to twinkle. Those were starts that could soothe anyone whenever they were needed, stars that had the warmth of human skin. This man would never betray him; he could not give up on the human heart, and Banagher had already witnessed this countless less. *I’m just worrying too much.* Once Banagher understood this, the goosebumps within him disappeared, “I understand.” He left Zinnerman, waved farewell to Flaste, and kicked hard at the catwalk railing to float towards the “Unicorn” cockpit.

(What are you doing, Banagher? You’re in the middle of a launch!)

Mihiro’s growl rang in his ears as he sat back on the linear seat. “I’m really sorry!” Banagher answered as he closed the hatch, let the “Unicorn” head towards the elevator, and apologized to Audrey on the assistant seat. The latter might had realized something as she shook her head slightly and showed a smile, but her expression immediately looked down. Amidst the tremors of the elevator that was starting to rise, the shadows from within shone onto the face under the helmet, leaving the cockpit in an isolated atmosphere no outsider could enter.

The first catapult deck in the middle of the ship was in vacuum. Banagher left the elevator, let the slipper-shaped catapult launcher attach itself to the feet of the “Unicorn”, and looked into space through the opened hatch. They could see the L1 region of the Moon, and the “L1 Junction” shone like a corroded moon in front of their eyes. *This will be the last, or maybe—* Banagher grabbed the control sticks before the following thoughts appeared, “We’re launching.” And said to Audrey,

“There’ll be a jolt from the launch. Watch up.”

“It’s fine. I once launched in a mobile suit together with Ensign Riddhe.”

The calm narrative voice caused Banagher to feel like he remembered a homework assignment he forgot to do. (Path’s clear. RX-0, please launch.) He was driven by Mihiro’s voice afterwards, “Got it.” and did not have time to reflect on Riddhe’s name as he answered. He could not deal with it even if he thought of it at this point, and there were other issues to prioritize. His mind forgot about the face of the person who once fought against him on Earth, exchanged looks with Audrey, and looked forward with no intention of looking back.

““Unicorn Gundam”, Banagher Links.”

“Mineva Zabi.”

“Let’s go!”

Their voices rang in unison, and the cable-powered catapult was activated. The portside catapult deck that was heavily damaged slid by, and the gliding deck protruding at the bow disappeared from the feet as the all-view monitor showed an endless void. Banagher endured the revolting sense of the blood flowing to his back as he checked on the laser communication with the “Nahel Argama”, and used the AMBAC propellers to turn the “Unicorn” around. There was no problem with the reaction speed, control feeling, etc. The newly calibrated beam rifle and shield he drew from the spare supplies responded well with the machine. Once he knew that the repaired mechanical arm was fine, his body felt contented, and the space that was devoid of air resistance and gravity was like a familiar backyard to him. The “Unicorn” rolled sideways, lit its thrusters, and flew in a straight line towards its target.

The Type 94 Base Jabber was launched from the “Nahel Argama”, and the bed-shaped machine ferrying 2 “Lotos” launched behind the “Unicorn”. The “Lotos” ferrying Conroy and company were to first reach the “L1 Junction” and check the inside of the facilities. (Listen, Banagher, no matter how trivial it is, report any anomaly you see.) Conroy reminded, “Got it. Please take care of me here, ECOAS” and Banagher answered as he ignored the handgun strapped to his ankle. (We’ll make a move first. Head straight towards the ‘light tower’.) After saying this, the 9-type Base Jabber dragged a trail of thruster light as it glided by from the side.

Banagher waited for that light to enter the stars, and took a deep breath. It would take another 5 minutes for him as he was moving to the target through inertia; the coordinates for the ‘L1 Junction’ was

fixed, and he just need to let the machine move on its own. “Are you alright?” Banagher looked back at Audrey, and took off his helmet. It was against the rules, but he had to do this to prevent voices from entering. Audrey, who was prompted by Banagher’s stare, removed her helmet too. Her deep inhaling rang beside Banagher’s ears, and this proved how heavy the pressure the atmosphere in the ship was bearing on her.

“The emergency call will reach the console speaker. You can relax.”

“Do I look that tense?”

The expression looked unexpectedly cute, and Banagher looked back at her with a smile. “Is that so…” Audrey lowered her chin slightly as she looked at the space beside them. The space region that was replicated through CG was slightly blue, and it was insufficient to change their mood. Her sidelong expression, which seemed to be blaming herself for the lack of experience, was immediately filled with a blank relaxation, and Banagher felt that the gloom he saw before was covering that frail white face.

He wanted to see the true identity of this gloom, and if possible, remove it so as to create an atmosphere both of them could share in—but he did not know how to speak up. There were a lot of things he could have talked of, but none of which formed in his heart. After several seconds of silence, he looked in front.

On thinking about it carefully, he knew nothing about Audrey. He did not know her interests, her habits, or even her birthday, but he felt that they understood each other. One would have to wonder why that was so. It was a long, long time ago since the last time they were alone like this, and there were so few times they were together. After a moment a hesitation, he looked at Audrey, “Audrey…” “Well…” but their voices interrupted each other, and they were at a loss of what to do. Banagher’s mind was filled with a blank, and he forgot what he wanted to say.

Pressured by the emerald eyes looking at him extremely closely, he turned his eyes away awkwardly and looked forward. The sound of the generator was the only thing occurring as silence descended upon them. “Banagher, do you believe in it?” after that, Audrey’s voice broke the silence, and Banagher turned his stare towards her eyes.

“Can we…Neo Zeon and Federation really coexist together?”

It felt as if they wanted to pull out this heavy object slowly, but the tremendous weight crashed upon them. With the sincere stare looking

at him, "…The results had shown, isn't it?" Banagher did not look away this time as he cautiously answered,

"Regardless of country and military, everyone should have a world they feel. If everyone believe—"

"The result isn't out yet. I don't know, what will happen before we get the "Laplace Box"…?"

"Audrey…"

"On Earth, I saw a lot of things when I was in Ensign Riddhe's house."

With the Earth behind her the size of a tennis ball, Audrey was looking at a certain place that did not belong. Banagher could only look at the side of her face.

"What the Earthnoids were thinking, how they viewed things, the ideals of the people who created the system called the Federation, the scars Zeon left that could not be erased…even after knowing this, this Mineva Zabi is unable to live in such a world and experience their lives. I understood that the world I knew before was so small."

There was a thin smile, and one could not help but think of the term 'self-deprecaiation'. Banagher was unable to bear watching on as he lowered his head. "That's why I can't be imprisoned by my own narrow views. I need to see the world with a wider view, regardless of Federation or Zeon; this is what I really think. But maybe even I can't accept this view. I thought of this several times when I was on Earth. I really can't understand these people at all, I can't find a common agreement with them…"

The word uneasiness was enough to describe the gloomy rising from her slender shoulders, and her clenched fists were trembling. She was uneasy that she could not be certain of her own actions, but even so, she had to try her best to keep bluffing; she had a pressure to be very certain of herself, and a self-guilt of fooling everyone. All of this became corrupted as it resonated with his uneasiness of the future, and he felt a mysterious sense of relief spreading deep within his heart.

He was mystified by these emerald eyes, and saw that she was supporting him again—he felt relieved knowing that all this was not true. As long as he believed that her starting point was not wrong, he would have no objections against accepting the current situation, and he could only prepare himself for the future. *As long as I'm with her, there's always a way,* Banagher suddenly thought of how he himself believed in this baseless theory.

“I saw a lot of things on Earth too.”

Banagher said to this Audrey Burne he met again. The latter lifted her head slightly, showing her eyes that were full of natural emotions, the same eyes he saw on “Industrial 7”.

“I nearly had a calamity in the desert, and I think I understand why humanity’s so bent on destroying the Earth. The human body is too weak to live nature. The natural these nature activists talked of is natural in the sense that it helps humans, but most of it can’t be helped. As long as humans remain as beings who want to live better lives, they won’t be able to avoid going against nature. I should say that this is natural for humans.”

“Someone once said before that everything starts with kind intentions…”

“I thought of it too. The Universal Century was started out of goodwill. The Spacenoids talk about Ere-ism…the drive to preserve Earth as a hometown, but it just feels so off-tangent because of the lack of experience in this sense. The Spacenoids can’t understand as their sense of nature is obtained from space.”

“Spacenoids’ sense of nature…?”

“I’m thinking of Newtypes are really like this. There’s the thinking that there’s a need to expand the senses humans have in order to make up for the overly wide space, but it’s impossible to experience this without going to space, no?”

Audrey blinked her eyes while looking surprised, nodded and showed an expression of understanding. Banagher lifted the fragments of thoughts in his head and continued,

“And as long there’s a possibility that humans may be abandoned in space, Earthnoids will never accept the thoughts Spacenoids have. Spacenoids can’t accept that the people left on Earth had special rights, and because of this twisted thinking, they did extreme things like throwing down a colony. It can’t be helped that there’s no common understanding, but the important thing is to understand that both sides are living in different worlds. It’s just like you said, that the world we live in can’t change. Once we admit that we’re living in an imperfect world and look for that path to near perfection…”

“A path to near-perfection…are you saying that’s a Newtype?”

“If we follow the definition Zeon Deikun laid out, there’s still no real Newtype born, though I hope that a few are standing at the door.”

Someone worthy of being entrusted with the “Box”—a real Newtype; no matter what his father thought, nobody other than God should decide this. The system hidden in the “Unicorn” relied on the machine to detect the brainwaves, including the artificial Cyber-Newtypes, and there was no real way to determine a real Newtype. It was the same thing as how a single-celled organism floating in the sea of beginning could never predict the evolution of life millions of years later.

“Fate can’t be changed, but destiny can. I have everything now… right?” Audrey muttered to herself as she looked at the moon a size larger than a basketball. That uneasy look on her face was erased somewhat. “You’re the same as us.” Banagher followed up on her words as he too looked at the Moon in front.

“Whether it’s the psycoframe that can move celestial bodies, or the “Laplace Box” that can change the world; as long we know such things truly exist, they will feel that humans really shouldn’t argue in this situation.”

“Yeah. This is…”

“They’re still in the “Nahel Argama”, but people like the Captain believe in such possibilities. The Federation and Neo Zeon…the common understanding between Earthnoids and Spacenoids is possible. Maybe the release of the “Box” will be the chance for this.”

Audrey thought of something, but could not say so as she lowered her head, showing gloom on her face again. “Of course, this is an observation based on my hopes.” Banagher hurriedly added on, but she suddenly lifted her head, and let her emerald eyes close in on him.

“I want to believe this too.”

She reached her arm out and grabbed Banagher by the upper arm. The forceful strength spread through the fabric, causing him to feel his heart race. *Convince me…*was the voice that rang the voice of reality, or the ‘voice’ resonating deep within his heart? Banagher was unable to determine as his eyes were rendered immobile by the lips in front of him, and he unwittingly moved his hand onto the back of Audrey’s own hand.

Time stood still, and it seemed that everything other than those two vanished. Banagher smelled a whiff of sweetness from the hair as he closed his eyes. Audrey held her breath, and their faces were almost touching as the lingering warmth from her face agitated his nose. Banagher predicted that their lips were going to touch each other, and was unable to think of anything; at that instant, an annoying breathing sound suddenly rang, causing their bodies that were almost united as one to suddenly freeze up.

(T-minus 60 till the designated location. It's about time to open the wireless communicator, you two.)

Conroy's voice rang, and he sounded like he heard everything, causing Banagher to experience what it meant for his face to flare up. He immediately looked forward and answered with a slightly higher pitch than usual, "Understand." He did not have the guts to exchanged looks with Audrey, who hurriedly sat still and put on her helmet again, and he let his stare escape to the 'L1 Junction' that could be identified with the human eye. The snowflake shaped object was glittering as it reflected the distant sunlight, and the light tower in space continued to

draw an intricate tessellation in space even as it remained this empty.

“It’s so pretty…” Audrey said. Banagher however abandoned all words that would match this atmosphere as he turned his stare to the coordinates meter on the display board. Once he was certain that it was almost 0, he checked the functions of all other systems. The Laplace Box showed no signs of activating, and for a short while, an awkward atmosphere remained in the cockpit.

Part 10[edit]

(This is ECOAS 920. We’ve arrived at the target. The RX-0 is headed to the designated coordinates.)

(Just like the time at the Prime Minister Residence, don’t miss out on any minor changes in the sensors. We have no idea what’s coming, whether it’s electric waves, magnetic waves, radiation or whatever.)

Once Captain Otto’s excited voice ended, a sound from the throat reached the man’s ears, and the sense of resistance pressing on his hands immediately vanished.

Zinnerman removed the hand pressing onto the man’s throat from behind, and pushed the body away. He then grabbed the guard that was floating down the corridor, pulled him into the wareroom, and stuffed him into a corridor packed with cardboard boxes. This was the second man—and it was really easy. His heart felt a sense of hesitation, but his body remembered what he had to do. Alec and the rest on the other team were probably thinking of how to carry out this operation so that they could end things. Zinnerman exchanged looked with Flaste, who was tying the first man with the cable, nodded, and took the wireless communicator from the guard. *There’s nothing to be mindful of when we start.* He repeated the words in his heart, and brought the communicator to his mouth.

“Everything’s going as planned.”

Creak creak. The noise shook the radio, indicating that the other party understood, and that they were proceeding as planned. Zinnerman turned his back on Flaste, who was tying the second man, and brought the hardened plastic attaché case to his hands. This attaché case he took from the “Garencieres” had the private items used for a Captain’s log. Naturally, the crew on this ship had inspected it, but in the end, they never found out that the buttons and the attaché case’s dial lock could be disassembled to found parts of a mini-handgun, and the handle could become the barrel.

There were 5 of the fire extinguishers they snuck in; they had to deal

with these guards before they could take control over the armory of the ship. Zinnerman checked that it was time for the decisive moment, and focused on the assembly of the gun. Flaste, who stuffed the second man into the cardboard boxes, “I didn’t expect such a lack of resistance at all.” And said with a suspiciously forced voice.

“It’ll all depends on what the Princess and the brat do next…”

Is this really alright? the glance that was looking over asked. *There’s nothing wrong here. We’re Neo Zeon soldiers, this is a Federation ship. We can’t think too much, and there’s no need for us to do so*. “Don’t worry.” Zinnerman answered, slid the assembled mini-handgun, checked the sights, and blew away the dust on the chamber.

“The Princess’s more mature than we think, unlike that brat.”

The face of the boy, who leapt out from the cockpit and flew over like a puppy, flashed in his mind. *It can’t be helped. You live in a different world from us.* He loaded the 6 25mm bullets into the magazine, let the thumb press on the slide lock, and unlocked the safety to chase after the image in his mind. The sound of the first bullet being loaded shook the air of the wareroom, pressing down slightly on the chest that swallowed the seed of guilt.

Part 11[edit]

The ‘L1 Junction’ was as elegant looking as a piece of jewelry, but had parts that offset the beauty mercilessly. The thick stabilizing cable running through the central core area was 10m in diameter and 7km long, forming a straight line through the two sides of the snowflake crystal.

There was a need to accept two gravity sources in order to stabilize the center of the gravities—the attraction forces from both the Earth and the Moon, and the cable reaching to the sides of each celestial body worked like a pendulum. The “Unicorn”, which was approaching the ‘L1 Junction’ from the Earth, followed the cable, approached the snowflake-shaped core, and reached the designated coordinations.

The range of the coordinates included the space of a 1km diameter with the ‘L1 Junction’ at center. In space, this was an extremely small space. Banagher let the relative velocity of the machine slow down to match the ‘L1 Junction’ speed, and cautiously crossed the coordinate space. It had been 3 minutes since they reached, but the “Unicorn” machine did not change in any way. All systems were normal, and the Laplace Program was silent.

“So the condition is to activate the NT-D first?”

“That may be the case…but it immediately transformed the moment it reached when we were at the Prime Minister residence.”

As Audrey looked around, Banagher answered her, and looked at the time on the display board. It had been 4 minutes, and it was weird for the machine to not transform at all. Perhaps he had missed out on something.

“How’s the inside, Mr Conroy?”

(It’s just an empty wasteland. The solar battery power is still there, but most of the functions are dead. There hasn’t been any change ever since the investigation began.)

The two “Lotos” landed on the ‘L1 Junction Point’ 10 minutes ago; one of them entered the core area through the port, while the other checked the Moon side that was hidden from where they were. The sun was located at the Earth’s side, so the side checking from the Moon side could only rely on moonlight for lighting. The “Loto” was most probably in their mobile suit state, flashing the search lights on its shoulders as it move on the solar panels slowly; however, it was impossible for the “Unicorn” on the Moon side to see it. Banagher glanced aside at the Base Jabber remaining at the empty port and let the machine move towards the base of the stabilizing cable. He could see the ‘L1 Junction’ from up close, and it was not of the same size as a ship. It was not as large as a colony, but it was large enough to be a temporary port, to a point where it could be called a space island.

They were at a loss of what to do. They had no idea how big the “Box” was, let alone what it contained. There were no given instructions, and looking for it here would be a search for a pin in a haystack. Banagher knew that it was useless, but he summoned the ‘L1 Junction’ construct map that was downloaded beforehand, and stared at the 3D model. (It can’t change into the “Gundam”? It released the information just like this in Dakar.) Conroy said. “But I can’t change it that freely.”. As he answered, “Banagher”, Audrey’s anxious voice rang.

“Since it’s a plan your father came up with, I don’t believe it’s so one-sided, but what if the “Box” is an item that brings calamity…?”

The hand touched the helmet to cut the communication line for the time being, and the face could not be described simply as serious. “I understand.” After exchanging looks with the stare that was full of killing intent, Banagher answered,

“At that moment, I’ll destroy it and prevent it from falling into other people’s hands.”

These words the words he uttered in his heart once he wanted to know the true identity of the “Box”—when he wanted to know the ‘answer’. Banagher stared at the sighing Audrey, and looked up at the ‘L1 Junction’ which stood like a wall, blocking his sight. “But I don’t think that is it.” he said as he stepped on the pedal lightly.

“It depends on how we use it; it can be something that brings light to this world…right, it depends on who uses it. He even created a system to distinguish Newtypes for this purpose.”

The “Unicorn” left the core and moved towards the outermost region of the snowflake. The civilian ship light moved by from afar below their feet, becoming part of the stars. From the way it moved forward, it seemed to be a ship headed from the Moon to Earth. All ships moving on this course would have to move by the ‘L1 Junction’.

“The real identity of the “Box”, the path to reach it, it’s definitely simpler…”

He looked above, and could see a glowing object shining brighter than the stars. It was the light of the colony, Side 2 that was revolving around L. The Side 5 that revolved around L1—the shoal space region and the “Industrial 7” within it were no longer in sight.

“Starting from “Industrial 7”, the first place was the debris of the Prime Minister residence “Laplace”…”

“Laplace” was the place where the Universal Century began, blown up with the world leaders within due to a terrorist attack. Banagher recalled the speech he heard back then; the voice of the first Prime Minister of the Earth Federation from a hundred years ago, on the last day of Anno Domini, narrating the ‘past’ together with the remnants that were cruelly blown up—

“And next is Dakar, the capital of the Earth Federation…”

The Universal Century Manhattan stood in the middle of the hot desert, and the strengths and weaknesses of the system called the Federation were shown there. Mahdi Garvey’s madness that became a sandstorm strong enough to cut skin, Loni’s brilliance, race and religion, the karma that could not be held down as it swirled at the bottom, the symbol of the ‘present’ that stood on the scorching land—

And then, what do I say now? What did father want to tell me by pointing here? Banagher let the “Unicorn” drift in space and looked around. The all-view monitor cut off the CG, showing the actual scenery of space, and he looked around together with the machine that was slowly turning around.

The cockpit that was surrounded by darkness became dim, and the white flare reflected from the 'L1 Junction' lit the place. *No, I still don't understand. Even if I'm determined to be a Newtype, I'm just a human who can only see what's in front of me. Tell me!* Banagher cried out in his heart. *If the lingering thoughts are real and resting in this "Unicorn", lead me to my path now.*

The need to show the power of human gentleness to humanity; you said that this is the responsibility of humans that entered space. The ghost of "Laplace", the First Prime Minister said the same thing too. That's kindness, right? It's the kindness that allows humanity to maintain its sanity, even in this harsh reality, even as we fight against all things unreasonable. As we journey the way to look for the "Box", we see a side of truth to the Earth. We see the world that is mixed with good and evil, hard to decipher, struggling to search for the 'light'. What happens next is the most important thing; to live in the possibilities brought about by kindness, to use this to survive, and to know what to take note of next. The body of flesh and blood accepts the 'past' and 'present', and what we should face next is—

A heavy heartbeat shook Banagher's body and rocked the cockpit. His heartbeat became one with the "Unicorn", and every pulse caused Banagher to feel his senses expanding. He felt that his nerves were linked to the mechanical fingertips, toes, everywhere, to the point where his senses became as large as the mobile suit.

The Moon was at his feet, and Earth was above him. In front of him was an infinite space. The living beings born on the celestial bodies should be headed to the unexplored world next. They were still limited to this small area of the Earth celestial sphere, but this space was opened in front of them, waiting for humanity to use its power of gentleness to shine its light into the darkness in front of them.

Perhaps one day, as they expand on their senses and understand ways to match their thoughts, when they may even have control over time, this space would be left wide open in front of humanity. They would soon use time, space and possibilities that will never be used up easily and open an unknown territory.

Through the past, the starting point where humanity still stands at this point, space, stars, and humans. The infinite presented by the 3 beings —the future.

"…I understand, father."

The words that were let out unwittingly became 'light', causing the forehead to let out a weak neural-like flash. That light became a V-

shaped blade antenna that spread apart, and the luminous light that showed the luminous light of the psycoframe as the armor split apart, and the body of the “Gundam” appeared in vacuum.

However, all Banagher did was to open his eyes naturally. “Banagher…!?” Audrey’s doubtful voice agitated his hearing in reality, pulling senses back onto the little body resting on the linear seat.

The signal of the NT-D flashed, and the machine that transformed into the “Gundam” was shown in its active state. Banagher wanted to be sure if Audrey was fine, but realized that the attachments protecting his head were holding it down. *There no need for this.* The attachments were removed the moment he thought this, and his physical body obtained its freedom again as it nearly float up from the linear seat. As he wanted to turn towards the assistant seat, the numerous stars shown on the all-view monitor increased in brightness, and the beams that reached out started to intertwine like they were drawing a constellation.

It was like an Observatory, like a view of the developing brain from within; the flickering stars were linked by their own beams, drawing what seemed to be either a constellation or a neural system, and each area was showing a different light. There were the Earth, Moon and colonies; and just when he was about to check the time, see the respective locations, and confirm the condition of the mobile suit that was at the place, the “Unicorn Gundam” moved on its own, changed the direction it was facing, and pointed its main camera to a corner in space.

The beams let out by the stars formed arcs around the all-view monitor, pointing at a red dot in the front. Numerous beams vanished, ostensibly absorbed by the red light, leaving behind a light spot that pointed at a place far away, and the logo ‘La+’ appeared beside it.

“Banagher…”

Audrey muttered blankly as she looked at the coordinate data that was beyond her expectant. “Right.” Banagher nodded as his voice came out from his dry throat.

“This is the last coordinate…where the “Laplace Box” is.”

Audrey’s hand that was resting on his shoulder shuddered. Banagher shook his head and moved his eyes that were attracted by the light, and reached his hand to his helmet to check if the wireless communicator was cut off. “Leader Conroy, “Nahel Argama”! The final location of the “Box” is—” but the moment he wanted to say this out, a

killing intent rose from below his feet, entering the cockpit, and a light rose, savagely burning a corner of his eyes.

The “Unicorn Gundam” reacted before Banagher could hold onto the control stick, and dodged on its own. The beam of the mega-particles let out a flash, covering the all-view monitor, and the explosions of scattered particles echoed through the cockpit.

Banagher drew the shield from his left hand and put it on the left hand as he let the machine zigzag, keeping his eyes at the source of the shot. The moment the navigation lights of the ships floating afar flashed by his eyes, a second shot was fired from there, and the I-field generator hidden inside the shield scattered the incoming high heat particles.

“At this time…!?”

Is it Federation or Zeon? the enemy chose to hide amongst the passing ships, and Banagher raised the Beam rifle that was loaded with the Beam Magnum. The ‘Unicorn Gundam” psycoframe detected this as it piloted the machine, and moved about to find a place he could shoot from. The impact of the anesthetic jolted through the arm, and the air sacks hidden in the pilot suit pressed down on the lower body, preventing the blood from falling, and making the upper body feel warm and uneasy. However, there was a cry like a wild beast at the next instant, causing Banagher to feel his hairs stand.

“Audrey!?”

He turned his head that was held down by the linear seat. Audrey’s upper body was forced back as she was pressed down by the accelerating G-force that could kill, and it was impossible to see her expression. It was impossible to endure the high mobility of the destroy mode without using the pilot suit and the linear seat. Banagher immediately relaxed his foot on the pedal and tried to focus on the killing intent that was closing in from afar.

The mega-particles grazed past the “Unicorn Gundam” that slowed down, and the heat and shock plummeted on the machine. As the cockpit shook wildly, the ‘La+’ light in a corner of space spun above, and the red light flickered from time to time.

Part 12[edit]

The white machine on the enlarged window staggered to the right due to the shockwave of the mega-particles. Even if the enemy machine were to move out of his sights, there was no need to worry about missing it. The enemy’s movements were dull, and the mobility could

be caught up with through the tracking system.

“That “Gundam” isn’t as amazing as what those rumors say. Keiman’s team is to deal with the “Nahel Argama”. I’ll handle this guy alone!”

Gilligan called into the wireless communicator and aimed the reticule of the beam launcher at the white machine. The low power of the generator caused the “Hizack” to be rather limited in its use of beam weaponary, but this custom unit had enough people to release the power of a sniper rifle. It had been less than 10 minutes since he launched from the mother “Gultoppr”, and he had already met this large prey. He aimed at the Zeon archenemy, the white mobile suit he saw several times on the documentaries, and let an umpteenth beam fly through the L1 space region.

The machine using the shield to block the front and deflect the scattered particles again went out of his sight. “Don’t you dare run away…!” Gilligan’s lips curled up as he said this, and used the AMBAC to balance himself as he stepped on the pedal. The thrusters on the back and legs let out flares, and as the “Hizack Custom” that was pursuing the “Gundam”, the 2 Keiman squadron “Hizacks” passed by below. The mobile suit squadron of the “Dromi” attacked from another direction, and Gilligan could see the “Mock Wooden Horse”—the “Nahel Argama” fire numerous anti-air shots.

It was a ship with its portside catapult deck damaged, but the number of fire trails was more than what he imagined. Keiman’s team could not attack, and scattered away. A series of missiles exploded in a corner, letting out huge fireballs that even the simulation shots could not compare to. The scattered dummy aerolite looked like Gilligan’s allied machines, causing him to feel cold sweat breaking.

Attack in a large scale and distract the ship’s attention to the outside. This was the content of the wireless signal from the “Mock Wooden Horse”, and it was possible to guess the reasoning behind this. However, one could only imagine what the sender’s situation was like. 'What will happen if the other 2 mobile suits launch? Can we hang on until the sender takes action? *This sudden thought caused Gilligan to tremble all over, but he felt his adrenaline rising, and the blood in his body felt a boiling sensation.*

This was different from the mock drills of red team and blue team where he worked together with the people he knew at the Defense College. It was an enemy he had never seen before, and the sense of tension arose as he could not determine the current situation, where a single mistake in the prediction would lead to death. This was--

“War…is it…?”

He muttered and licked his dry lips. He remembered the useless weapon skills, the meaningless research he kept proceeding with were all for this moment. He remembered the days where he kept doing assignments he did not need to hand in and merely locked himself in the vault of self-satisfaction—this would be the day where he clear the vault. He nurtured skills, instincts and a hardy will in an old machine; he had to take down that “Unicorn” to prove that this was not all a waste.

Gilligan continued to let the “Hizack Custom” release its maximum thruster to pursue the “Gundam”, darting around, looking like it was all fluff and no substance as it escaped into the ‘L1 Junction’. He used the two manipulators to wield the beam launcher that was as long as the mobile suit itself, waited for the energy to charge, and squeeze the trigger. The beam flew in a straight line in this space of actual combat, shooting a black hole through the solar panel the “Gundam” was hiding at.

Part 13[edit]

“The Zeon Republic?”

The beam grazed by near the bridge as Otto repeated these words, and the flash and tremors overwhelmed all his senses. “That’s right!” The sensor operator roared with a voice no softer than the explosions.

“It’s the Musai-Kai class “Gultoppr” and “Dromi”! They requested for an offshore trip in the name of training their fleet!”

The sensor screen showed the CG of the Musai-Kai class ships and the data of the “Hizacks” that were attacking. If they were to believe the identification data on the records, both were weapons that were currently in active service for the Zeon Republic. To the “Nahel Argama”, who had been wary of the pursuit from the Federation and Neo Zeon, the real identity of this enemy was completely beyond their expectations— “What’s going on…” Otto muttered, but nobody was in the mood to answer him, and he turned his sights to the main screen. There were 8 “Hizacks”, including the enemy that was attacking the “Unicorn Gundam”. In contrast, the only mobile suits they could send out to intercept immediately were the “ReZEL” and the “Stark Jegan”. Even if they were facing old mobile suits that were produced more than 10 years ago, it would be tough for them against such overwhelming numbers. And if the Musai-Kai ships on standby were to start firing their cannons…

He regretted not deploying mobile suits to defend the ship just because they did not detect any enemies. The radar had already caught sight of the Republic's ships, but who was to expect that this unrelated party would suddenly launch an attack? Otto slammed the Captain's seat armrest hard, "Hasn't the mobile suit squad launched yet!!!?" he roared, but Mihiro replied. "Negative! The enemy's attacks are too intense—" her words were interrupted by an explosion from below their feet. (First generator room is on fire!) (Emergency response team! Your reaction is too slow! What are you doing!?) The furious calls through the ship communicator echoed in the bridge.

The engine was not hit directly, but the enemy's attacks could be said to be indiscriminate. They had no intent of breaking through the anti-air fire, just doing hit and runs over and over again. If this were to keep up, who knew how long it would take before the bridge took a direct hit. Otto realized that nobody on the bridge was dressed in a normal suit, including himself, "Anyone can go. Just get the normal suits!" he yelled, "We sent someone here!" Liam replied loudly, her face showing some shadows lit by the flashes of the cannons.

"What is the "Gundam" doing!? Can't we call him back!?"

"The line's dead. He hid behind the 'L1 Junction', and it looks like he's in a tough battle."

"Tell the ECOAS "Lotos" to support him. The enemy's using old mobile suits, so it shouldn't be an opponent that's tough to deal with—"

"That boy can't fight properly."

Upon hearing Liam's murmuring, Otto swallowed the words he was about to say. "Princess Mineva is on board too, so…" he felt a chill as he saw how she was having difficulty expressing herself, and looked at the lights of explosions that occurred near the 'L1 Junction' outside the window. There was no need to imagine how it was like on the assistance seat lacking in G-force resistance, exposed to the monstrous mobility. He clicked his tongue upon realizing that he neglected to think about this, "But if this keeps up…" the moment he muttered, the door behind opened as the explosion rang.

Are the normal suits here now? "Too slow! Hurry…!" Otto turned his stare behind his chair, but lost his voice as his body froze on the Captain's seat. It was not the crew member who went to get the normal suit. The fatal anomaly that brought about this sudden scenario —the anomaly betrayed the little developments that happened for the past few days as it stood at the door of the Captain's seat.

Liam too gasped as she remained rooted to the floor, but Mihiro and the sensor operator stopped what they were doing in shock. Otto had been feeling that the movements of each department had been remarkably slow ever since the battle began, and as he digested the overly perfect timing of the Republic's attack, he realized the reality he was facing as he exchanged looks with the anomaly standing at the door. They exchanged stares for a while, and the submachine gun in this anomaly's hand broke this standoff as the dark flash suppressor was looking over at him.

The one standing with the gun showed the expression of someone who understood how important this role was. Resistance is futile. As a commander, there is only one thing I can do—*the moment he grabbed onto the armrest tightly, "DO YOU HAVE NO SHAME…!" Liam hollered as she took a step forward. Otto wanted to stop her, but it was too late as the muzzle of the submachine gun let out a flash, creating a light that was more dazzling than the explosions outside the window.*

Part 14[edit]

The enemy drew the beam saber from the shield on its shoulder, and charged right in with a bright glow that sliced through the darkness; however, this enemy made a fatal mistake. The blade hit the warning light of the solar panel before it swung down, and missed the chance to slash.

Banagher had a rough grasp of the overly straight and direct movement. It was easy to dodge it, and he could counterattack with the beam saber beside him, but he knew that Audrey would not be alright. He used the shield to block the slash, gave up on moving to the back of the enemy unit, and let the "Unicorn Gundam" retreat to the Moon side. *I can't use the thrusters.* This thinking caused his reaction to dull, and he could not control the machine well as it spun in an awkward manner. His efforts to adjust his balance with the AMBAC were in vain as the machine let out a shock as it crashed into the stabilizing cable. "Leave me alone for now, Banagher!" Audrey's loud voice echoed in this cockpit that was shaking tremendously.

"Fight properly! If this keeps up—"

The enemy "Hizack Custom" kicked itself off the warning lights pillar and approached quickly from near the feet, raising the beam saber in its hands. This however was the same pattern; Banagher knew that he would miss, but shot the Beam Magnum at the enemy unit. The mega particles compressed in the Magnum magazine were released, and a large beam exploded, grazing by the monoeyed giant. The solar panels in its path were scorched completely, and there were visible

scars on this ‘L1 Junction’ that could be seen from afar. However, the distance was not close enough to take down an enemy through impact. Banagher let the machine approach the outermost area of the core and hid in the shadows of the panel joints; the “Hizack Custom” did not react as he expected, and did not fire back. Banagher was already in the enemy’s firing path, but the machine wielding the beam launcher seemed to panic as it retreated, and flew in a straight line to hide in a blind spot of the ‘L1 Junction’.

At this moment, another “Hizack” flew by from the other side of the Moon, frantically firing its machine gun. It did not try to suppress the “Loto” hiding in the core, looking for a chance to interfere in the battle as it stood on the same path as the other machine. Banagher aimed the barrel of the beam rifle to suppress it without even using his Beam Magnum, guessed that the enemy would dodge it, and fired the Vulcan cannons on its head. The 60mm physical bullets flew out in a fan, and the “Hizack” dodged just as Banagher expected, letting out a flash of a direct hit on the feet. The machine immediately dodged, but its thruster output was too much, and turned back to leave the battle space region immediately. The enemy unit had no intention to fire suppressing shots, forgot to work together with their allies, and only intended to come in with guts. *Are they terrified after seeing the power of the Beam Magnum?*

“These guys are complete amateurs…”

He let out these words from his deflated body. It was not a question of machine functions, as the Zeon remnants on Earth had used machines older than the current enemies, and managed to fight the newest machines of the Federation to a standstill. It escaped from the shadows of the structure and flew above the solar panels. “That’s a Republic’s machine.” Audrey spoke at this instant, and Banagher again looked at the CG corrected image caught on the enlarged window.

Prompted by her words, Banagher realized that he had seen those shiny grey machines that were not suitable for combat on the news before. The news footage of the Federation space army exercise would occasionally have Zeon Republic mobile suits shown on it. *Is it working with the Federation’s safety clause to attack a ship that defied orders?* He looked at the machine that had the design of the “Sleeves”, but was vastly inferior in technology. “The Republic…” Just when he was about to ask back, the wireless communicator, hindered by Minovsky particles, let out a person’s voice that rang clearly amidst the noise.

(…Banagher, “Unicorn Gundam”, do you hear me?)

Banagher left the blind side of the ‘L1 Junction’, and it seemed that the laser communication had reverted back to normal. The signal position was automatically parsed through, and once the window caught sight of the enlarged visual of the “Nahel Argama”, the gruff voice he was used to hearing continued.

(This is Lieutenant Zinnerman. Cease battle immediately and abide by the Republic’s instructions. The “Nahel Argama” is currently under our occupation, and if you don’t follow our instructions, we will not guarantee the safety of the Captain and the crew.)

Banagher could not understand what he just heard as a blunt impact passed through his forehead. His body and mind were relaxed in an instant, and he was unable to move, “…What?” as he let out this question as he placed his hand on the helmet.

“I don’t understand, Captain. What are you saying? You occupied the “Nahel Argama”…”

(It’s exactly what I mean. As long as you follow my instructions, I won’t hurt you. Disengage immediately.)

The approaching alarm suddenly rang, and a part of his consciousness that nearly left returned to his physical body. The “Hizacks” which retreated for a moment drew a large arc as it closed in gradually. These two machines separated from each other, closing in in an encircling manner, obviously showing that they were in sync with this wireless feed. “Wa-wait a moment…” Banagher groaned as he let his back rest on the linear seat. His pulse was beating fast, and cold sweat was trickling down him.

“What’s going on, Captain!? Please explain, explain what you mean clearly!”

There was no response. The “Nahel Argama” was behind the approaching “Hizacks”, about 100km away from the ‘L1 Junction’, being extremely quiet. It did not launch any anti-air fire, and the Republic’s mobile suits were gradually gathered around the silent ship. *What? What’s going on here?* Banagher’s thoughts and stare kept wavering, and he turned his head to look at Audrey beside him. “Say something too, Audrey.” The lowered head however shook a little, and the emerald eyes looked back at him.

“The Captain’s acting weird. He seems to be mistaken about something. Come talk to him…”

The eyes that should be doubtful over the exact same situation remained full of gloom and doubt in the chilling silence. She, who had

been preaching about the possibility of the Federation and Neo Zeon working together—no, the more she preached, the more doubtful she got. She was saying wordless that she knew this would happen, she was afraid of this, and she had gloomily accepted this situation that could not be reversed…

The hand grabbing her shoulder lost strength as it floated in space without a target. “How can that…” the words that were leaked out remained in the helmet, and Banagher opened it as he felt difficulty in breathing. Audrey too looked down, her expression not moving as the “Nahel Argama” too remained silent. *What are you doing there?* Banagher’s wavering stare looked on at the white ship as he muttered in his mouth. *You can’t save anyone even if you do that. You understand this more than anyone else, who what are you doing there?*

“It’s the usual Captain, saying that he won’t forgive me if you get hurt, laughing like usual…this is too weird. Why is it like this? The Cap… Captain…”

“Zinnerman.”

Audrey interrupted Banagher’s never ending uttering as she lifted her head to say this. The latter was shocked by her, who was not Audrey, but had the expression and voice of Mineva, and stared at her sidelong silently.

“I command you, in the name of Mineva Zabi…you won’t listen even if I say this, right?”

(That’s right.)

“Is that so…how unfortunate.”

A tint of gloomy flashed by Audrey’s lowered face in an instant, and she opened the visor of the helmet to give an adamant look back at Banagher. She cut the communication line immediately and spoke quickly, “Banagher, destroy the “Unicorn”.” For a moment, Banagher could not understand what she just said.

“Zinnerman made contacts with the “Sleeves”, and the reinforcements will be here immediately. Before the “Box” lands in their hands—”

(Banagher, take Mineva Zabi as hostage.)

Another voice immediately rang in the helmet again, and Banagher widened his half-opened eyes.

“Mr Conroy…”

(It's a critical situation now. This concerns the lives of the crew.)

Banagher looked at the source coordinates of the signal, and turned his stare to the 'L1 Junction' behind him. He could not identify the "Lotos" hidden inside the core area, and he could only see the vivid image of Conroy's stern expression as the latter handed the handgun over. Banagher looked over and saw the automatic handgun strapped in the leather holster on his right ankle. There was a glossy black handle revealed from the gaps of the buckle—*use this to point at Audrey? Why?*

(Stop it Banagher, you can't do it.)

Zinnerman's voice interrupted, and his familiar voice echoed in Banagher's mind as the latter pressed onto his helmet with both hands.

(Think about it, you can't change anything if you hand the "Box" over to the Federation. Once they rebuild their coexisting relationship with the Vist Foundation, the Princess and the rest of us will be buried in the darkness. Think about Marida; you should know the methods they use here.)

"But the people on the "Nahel Argama"…Captain Bright won't do this —"

(What can a mere soldier do? We can only do this to save them. If we aren't divided between Federation and Neo Zeon, we should be thinking about the same thing.)

This isn't it. Banagher thought, but while he thought about why this was not the case, he could not think of an answer, and looked at Audrey. The emerald eyes were wordless, (Don't be fooled) Conroy's voice rang,

(They're experts at lying. Don't listen to them; you have the trump card here.)

(Are you going to believe those men who intend to use the Princess as a hostage? Come with us, Banagher. This is for the good of the Princess too.)

The "Hizack Custom" was already at a distance the human eye could see, aiming its beam launcher at Banagher's unit, ready to fire anytime too, causing the latter to feel revolted. (This is Lieutenant Gilligan Eustace of the Zeon Republic army. Lower your weapon immediately and open the hatch…) Upon hearing the voice of the pilot, Banagher clenched his fist that was drenched in sweat. *Destroy the machine,*

surrender to Neo Zeon, take Audrey as a hostage; everyone only cares about themselves, think about their own side. Is it right for me to destroy the "Unicorn" like this? Do I destroy this machine that is the only path to the "Box", the one that sent me on a journey from the past, present and future, the path leading to Father's ideals of wanting to present the possibilities of humanity—

(Do you hear me? Lower your beam rifle…)

The pilot's hysterical voice continued. "SHUT UP!" Banagher however interrupted him as he used the momentum to step on the pedal.

The "Unicorn Gundam" suddenly accelerating and crashed into the "Hizack Custom" in front of it. The impact shook the cockpit, "Banagher…!" and Audrey shouted as she shook about, but he ignored her. He did not look at the "Hizack Custom" that was sent flying, and stared right at the white hull of the "Nahel Argama".

I haven't thought of anything yet; I just want to see the Captain's face. I can't continue on with this conversation without us facing each other, and we won't be able to understand each other like this. That profile took care of me when we crossed the desert; you held back in our fight above Dakar. You hated the meaningless massacre below you and allowed me to charge out silently—

A narrow flash crossed by in front of his eyes, and his burning head was cooled by this dampener. He instinctively stopped and let the "Unicorn Gundam" turn at practically 90 degrees, but upon hearing a collapsed lung-like gasping, he felt the blood drain off from his body.

He forgot that Audrey was present too, and he turned his head back to see her limp there. "Audrey!" Banagher exclaimed as he shook her shoulder.

Idiot, I'm an idiot. She's the only one left I have to protect no matter what. He was driven by his fear and patted her face in the helmet several times; her trembling eyes opened slightly, and her unfocused eyes were looking back at him. The moment he was about to heave a sigh of relief, (Calm down, Banagher.) a new voice came in through the wireless communicator, causing Banagher to feel the numbness on his hand that was touching Audrey.

(Your actions will implicate many people's lives. It is better for you not to mess around)

Some objects fired a trail of threatening shots—and the cabled operation pods retracted back upon the arms of an abnormally shaped mobile suit near Banagher. Behind the purple machine that resembled

a rose was a machine with bright red armor, appearing behind the “Nahel Argama”, causing Banagher to stare intently at it.

“Full Frontal…”

Audrey, who seemed to have regained consciousness, said blankly. The “Sinanju” passed by the purple machine and matched its speed with the “Nahel Argama” as it stood in front, not raising the beam rifle in its hand as it looked down at the “Unicorn Gundam”. Two “Geara Zulus” raised the beam launchers in its place, and their monoeyes were giving off intimidating lights, just like the purple machine. Banagher saw that these were veterans that were used to fighting, different from the “Hizacks” of the Republic, and imagined the masked face he saw on “Palau” with the red machine.

(Surrender. This is the best option now.)

The voice rang beside his ears, corroding his mind as it continued. The hands holding the control sticks lost strength, and Banagher’s unfocused expression was fluttering in space. *The best path, the path leading to the future, what Father left to me.* These completely unrelated words spun in his mind, festered, collapsed, and lost all meanings; he did not have the ability to think of what was the best option any more, and was left in a moment of ridiculous rambling as his empty mind had no where to go to.

Perhaps it was for this reason that he could not react immediately when Audrey got up from her assistant seat and reached her hand for his legs. When he realized that the handgun was drawn out, it was already pointed at his abdomen, and he finally looked at her face.

Audrey. He wanted to call her, but he could not, and the hard block pressing on his abdomen was the only thing he could feel. Audrey continued to exchange stares with Banagher, “It’s been tough on you, Captain Full Frontal.” She said quietly,

“The pilot of the “Unicorn” can’t make a decision coolly in this situation. I’ve taken over the cockpit.”

(Is this fine…Your Highness Mineva?)

“It can’t be helped since things have already developed till this point. Where do I go next?”

(Just land on the “Nahel Argama”. Can you disarm it?)

Frontal’s voice was rather calm. “Audrey…” Banagher eked out the voice from his throat, and saw that she was showing much restrain on her expression. *Was it an act?* He wanted to find out from it, but the emerald eyes did not answer. The gun was pressed at his abdomen with more force, and a stare pierced through his body and mind, ostensibly testing the hardness of something. Banagher’s heart was shaken deep down, and he realized this was an important situation. He closed his eyes for a moment, and took a deep breath before looking in front.

He unlocked the control stick and dropped the beam rifle from the right manipulator. The NT-D flashed at this moment, and the psycoframe light that could be seen from even within the cockpit vanished. The expanded frame shrank, the sliding armor returned back to its fixed position, the bladed antenna closed to form the lone horn again, and the dual-eye sensors under it lost all glow. Banagher checked that the red light of “La+” vanished and that the machine was back to its “Unicorn” state, and lit its thrusters to close its distance with the “Nahel Argama”.

The “Geara Zulu” grabbed the beam rifle floating in space, and Banagher followed it to the white ship that was in Neo Zeon’s grasps. Hostility, suspicions, conscience; Banagher felt the numerous stares and emotions around him, and he focused on letting the “Unicorn” move forward. Trusting others—as he personally experienced how difficult it was to do this, he put his thoughts on the life that was connected to this gun. As Audrey continued to point the gun at him,

Frontal's "SInanju" stood above him, staring down at them, and the machine that was the embodiment of the Red Comet continued to float in the darkness.

Chapter 3[edit]

Part 1[edit]

"…Did you hear the broadcast in the bridge? All personnel are to head to the mobile suit deck without exception."

"But you can't extract the people with drips here, you know!? How am I supposed to deal with them under zero gravity? It's okay if we're talking about the guys in the infirmary, but the patients in the ICU can't move. There's a clause in the constitution that allows for wounded soldiers to be treated too."

This familiar voice rang with a stubborn force of anger in her ears. Marida Cruz widened her eyes, and her blurry stare looked around.

She saw the white ceiling of what seemed to be an infirmary. It was not the ceiling of the "Garencieres", and once she understood this, there was a weak electrical surge flowing through her body, and she turned her heavy head in the direction where the sound came from. There was a hulking male figure outside the curtains surrounding the infirmary bed, wriggling there; it was someone she knew, one of the members of the "Garencieres" crew, Alec, the backup steering pillow. He had a bulky figure, but he was timid, and at this point, he was holding onto a sub machine-gun. She also had an impression on the man in white clothes, whom the gun was being pointed to, but she was not too familiar with him. He was the military doctor in charge of treating her when she was captured and brought aboard the "Nahel Argama", and she remembered that he was called Hasan…

Suddenly, a headache caused her blurry vision to be interrupted. *What's going on? Wasn't I brought to Earth?* Her body felt heavy, and her mouth still felt a little numb; she felt gravity, but she wondered whether she was on Earth or in space—she closed her eyes, and then opened them again, and looked outside the curtain with a clearer vision this time. "Say something too, Mr. Gael." Hasan said as he looked past Alec, and stared upon the 3rd figure.

"It was for a short moment, but you did work together with them, right? Even if you want to occupy a ship, there has to be some basic rules here. Isn't there anyone easier to negotiate with?"

From the gap between the curtains, she could see the side face of a silent man. She looked into the black eyes of the bald man who seemed to be full of vigor, and realized that this was a face she saw before too…as she thought about this, “It’s useless.” A sudden voice caused her eyelids to numb.

“We’ve been on this “Nahel Argama” far longer than the time he spent on the “Garencieres”.”

Zinnerman said as entered her vision, and he looked at the man called Gael. They exchanged sinister looks, and after a moment, Zinnerman looked away. “…It’s useless to hope for terrorists to abide by rules, is it?” Hasan said these words, and Zinnerman turned his firm stare over at him.

“That’s how it is. If we’re not recognized as soldiers, there’s no need for us to follow the rules.”

ZInnerman pulled the handgun from his waist and pointed it at Hasan nonchalantly. The sudden tense atmosphere jolted Marida’s dull body, and her body shuddered as she laid on the bed. Zinnerman however seemed to notice her presence, and shuddered for a moment before looking over at her. “Dr. Hasan.” Gael brought the silence.

“Zinnerman’s serious here. It’s best to listen to him now.”

“But…”

“We can only let them take the men away. They should be able to recognize that we’re bringing along necessary medical equipment.”

Gael again looked at Zinnerman in the eyes, showing an embolism of restrained emotions. “You need to let us check through the stuff.” Zinnerman frowned as he said this, and then lowered his gun pointing at Hasan. The latter glared back, but left unwillingly after being prompted by Gael, “I’ll help out too. Let’s go.” Alec seemed to be relieved, but Gael did not care as he followed Hasan.

“How unfortunate.”

Gael’s burly frame muttered as he passed by Zinnerman, and then disappeared from her vision. Alec too left, and the side of Zinnerman’s face was the only thing left through the gap of the curtains. The black eyes tried to suppress the emotions it just could not do so, and they were twitching on his emotionless face. *Master seems to be in pain. Why am I still lying in such a place?* Marida bent her back, wanting to bring her upper body up, but the tremendous pain on her flank caused her to grit her teeth in agony, “Mas…ter…” and she eked out the voice

in an interrupted manner. Zinnerman walked over to her in large steps, and the bearded face she ostensibly had not seen in a while covered the light panel on the ceiling.

The faded leather jacket gave a little gunpowder smell. The chilly air outside flowed into the bed, causing her to feel a little tense as she laid down it defenseless. “This is…?” She let out a dry voice, and could not exert strength into her limbs freely. Zinnerman placed his hand on her forehead, “Don’t worry.” He said silently,

“I won’t ask you to move, so just sleep for a while here. Everything will be over when you wake up next time.”

The touch of the rugged palm moved from the forehead to the eyelids, giving warmth that seeped into her body and mind. *That’s right. This is the hand that called me, and pulled me out from the darkness.* Marida recalled this, but this was still unable to shake off her sleepiness. She closed her eyes slightly, and reached her arm that ostensibly had the drip on it at Zinnerman; her outstretched fingers touched the latter’s. *It’s daddy’s hand.* This non-contextual line appeared in her mind, and the body warmth of Zinnerman beside her vanished.

There was the sound of the curtains being pulled up, and the body that was surrounded by the cold and silent air outside drifted away gradually. Marida watched the back silhouette that was full of hardship, realized that she had no ability to support him, and let her body, ostensibly as heavy as lead, sink into the bed.

Part 2[edit]

This space was way too spacious for Gilligan, whose eyes were already used to the mobile suit deck of the Musai-Kai. The ceiling that was 7 levels tall was 30m in height, and the walls that were probably80m long had many hangars for maintenance lined up. *If there’s another deck for launching and landing, this ridiculously large yet empty place is most likely a storage. There’s a construction area for disassembly located below the floor, and yet they managed to preserve a space 2 times smaller than this; got to hand it to them there.*

“I suppose only those people with their souls sucked away by gravity can think of making a mobile suit stand on this deck.”

Upon hearing Gilligan’s little half-joke, “Yeah.” Lieutenant Keiman answered. It had been 2 years since Gilligan last entered a Federation’s ship for a common exercise, but the “Mock Wooden Horse”—the “Nahel Argama” had far more surplus items compared to

the other ships. He looked at the 12 hangars lined along the wall, and felt that it was truly a waste of space. A Republic's ship would effectively use the space on the ceiling and the floor to ferry double the number of mobile suits.

However, the "Nahel Argama" was in a situation which could only be described as desolated. There were 2 standard sized machines on the hangars, and there were 2 of the "Sleeves" Geara Zulu beside it; on the opposite wall, there were 4 Gultoppr squadron's "Hizacks" lined up, with Gilligan's custom unit at the forefront. The Federation units with the goggles were moved to a corner to make space for the monoeyed units that inherited the design of the "Zaku", and this scene was the best proof that this ship was under the dominion of Zeon. However, these were merely large tools used to enact the current situation. Gilligan poked his body out from the catwalk beside the hangar and let the atmosphere of sovereignty enter his eyes.

The bright red armor leaned its back against the wall close to the bow, ostensibly floating in the air. That was the "Sinanju", the unit of Full Frontal, whom they called the Second Coming of Char. The presence it gave off really gave a vibe that it was the true revival of the Red Comet. This "Sleeves" mobile suit was truly the baron of this current atmosphere. The cockpit covered laced with gold ornaments on the side opened, the pilot appeared from within, and the mask that covered the eyes and the forehead left more confidence in Gilligan's heart as he felt affirmed.

It seemed true that the man really would not wear a normal suit even in battle. As his eyes pursued the bright red uniform, "It's just like Char…" Gilligan muttered to himself, and he touched the rank insignia sewn on his mantle, dangling in front of his chest. The insignia that was sewn onto the mantle through memory fibers would not float easily even in zero gravity. The place was secure in the airlock, but it certainly would not be a good idea to remove their normal suits in the mobile suit deck of an enemy ship; however, Gilligan commanded his subordinates to change into the Republic army's mantles, as he felt that by wearing the clothes given by the Federation, he could not become one with the current atmosphere.

What kind of people are we, the Republic army, to him? Gilligan tidied his mantle as his eyes pursued after Frontal, and then, the white mobile suit caused him to frown. The lone horned giant standing at the bow side of the deck did not match the deck dominated by the Red Comet. "Is that the "Gundam"…?" Keiman seemed to have seen the same thing as he muttered, and Gilligan looked at the "Unicorn" while suppressing the incensed look of his face.

“Yeah. It becomes like that when the horns on its head closes. I don’t know what it means though.”

Keiman however did not look back at Gilligan as the latter uttered these words, and reached his neck out from the railing to look at the “Unicorn”. Keiman’s squadron was assigned to attack the “Nahel Argama” directly, and thus, he did not witness the monstrous fighting strength that “Gundam”. The fear back then became cold sweat that appeared on Gilligan’s forehead, and he clenched his fists that were holding onto the railing.

That “Gundam” was not only superior in terms of capabilities, but also showed disposition. It crushed Gilligan’s belief that he could defeat tens or hundreds of people with only Patriotism, and showed the true disposition of a battlefield. His body was once swallowed up by it, and shriveled back when he only thought of how to escape from its firing range. If it was not for the espionage mission by the “Sleeves” on the “Nahel Argama” ceasing the battle one-sidedly, he would have escaped back to the “Gultoppr” without caring about his pride. That “Gundam” had at least put a dampener upon him, and it was an undeniable fact that the enthusiasm he had right from the beginning was all gone without a trace.

What kind of guy is that pilot? Gilligan looked at the gondola beside the cockpit of the “Unicorn”, and looked at the pilot who seemed to be the size of a bean from where he was, but the rumbling of the partition wall at the aft opening. The large wall caused the entire deck to tremor, and two small mobile suits entered, followed by a uniquely-shaped purple mobile suit with 3 claws on each of its two hands. Gilligan saw the two mini units before; they were most likely tasked with moving the mobile suits from the landing deck. They were accompanying the unit of the escort squad leader, Lieutenant Angelo’s “Rozen Zulu”; someone called it as such through the wireless communicator before.

The two mini mobile suits were chased away from the “Rozen Zulu”, which knelt down as it passed through the partition wall; they moved to a corner of the deck and stopped. These mini mobile suits were less than half the size of the “Rozen Zulu”, and were like little children that were caught in a prank and brought back; however, the technology used on them were definitely of the latest, for they were able to downside the generator and the propulsion system to this extent. “Those are the Manhunter machines.” Keiman muttered at Gilligan’s ears, causing the latter to frown. The Manhunters was the derogative name given to the special forces ECOAS, and this symbol of the Federation government’s caprice became a topic common amongst the “Wind’s Assembly”.

Suddenly, Gilligan felt uneasy. It would take more than a day for the "Sleeves" fleet hiding in Side 6 to reach them. During this time, they had to occupy the "Nahel Argama" with the people they had here. Including the shackled crew brought here by the mobile suits, there were only 16 people on Frontal's team. Including the workers that snuck in here—the Garencieres team had less than 50 people. Of course, they would also need to assign people for outside security, so the numbers occupying the ship will be less. The invigilation of the inside of this ship would have to consist mainly of the special forces sent over by the "Gultoppr" and the "Dromi". Even including the 30 Special Forces members sent by the 2 ships, the number of people that could keep watch over this ship would be less than a hundred.

This number would have been enough for the 400 "Mock Wooden Horse" crew members that was probably disarmed, but it would be a different case altogether if there were ECOAS members involved. They went through hellish training, and were deemed as monsters by those who were also soldiers. In comparison, this side had Republic soldiers, of which two-thirds hardly went through actual combat. *Can we actually suppress them?* Gilligan wondered, and felt doubt in his uneasy heart.

Gilligan himself realized that this was due to the fear caused by his experience with the "Gundam". The "Gundam" pilot had personally taught him that the difference of life and death on a battlefield was all on personal spirit, but the contents of the clashing wills were different from what he imagined. It was something cruder, more realistic; it was a simple yet powerful emotion, of not wanting to die, but it felt no different from being thrown into a dangerous workplace. There was no sense of justice to delight himself in, no room for any high level tactics to interfere; it was a terror where he could be killed by a truck or a crane, a violent death he would be helpless against. To him, who had no sense of work ethic, and managed to hang on till now because his ideals, it took him all his effort not to be blown away by the blowing winds.

However, it was different from what he imagined. To put it simply, this would be all the explanation, but there was something behind this abnormal feeling, one that could cause the current situation to collapse. "Are we really fine? We're going to be alone before the main forces of the "Sleeves" arrive…" Keiman continued, and Gilligian looked at the ECOAS mobile suit that got into a landing position. "I heard that the Garencieres team is full of hardened solders. With the power of us Special Forces—" he answered distractedly, but at the same time, the atmosphere on the deck suddenly changed, and a

bright color appeared in the corner of his eyes.

The color passed through the air lock on the opposite wall and appeared on the catwalk. The bright green uniform had golden embroidery around it, and she had a wine red cape draped on her. It was impossible to see her appearance from this place, but the presence she gave off was not something an ordinary officer could compare to. The profile matched the image of the young Mineva Lao Zabi he saw in the documentaries, and his body froze. “Oi, that’s…!” “Isn’t that Her Highness Mineva Zabi?” there were similar buzzing occurring everywhere, causing the atmosphere on the deck to be shaken by the commotion.

The profile, ostensibly Mineva herself, ignored all the stares as she stepped on the catwalk. That delicate body was accompanied by Frontal’s escort squad, and her cape fluttered in the air. There was a light lit on the mobile suit deck filled with furor, and Gilligan felt all anxiety in him disappear as he was basically touched when he saw that figure. Mineva passed by her comrades in Republic army’s mantles, and went right at the hangar with the “Unicorn” on it. She saw the Federation soldiers dragged away without being able to do anything as they had guns pointed at them, and this embodiment of Zeonism was right in his vision—

“Sieg Zeon!”

The impulse in his heart surged out from his mouth in the form of words. Cheers immediately erupted, and many chants rang on the deck. Sieg Zeon, Sieg Zeon. The cheers of the Republic’s soldiers immediately filled the mobile suit deck, shaking the “Nahel Argama”. Gilligan believed that this wave would seep through space and reach all over the Earth Celestial sphere, becoming a power that beckons an awakening of a new age.

This is what I hoped for. The anxiety and uneasiness from before were swept apart, and he was driven with a thought that he could die whenever he could. The cheers of Sieg Zeon did not end for a short while, and the men, who found their refuge of pride, let their cheers echo through the air filling the deck.

Part 3[edit]

The fanatical cheers felt like a wall more than voices. It was a high overpowering wall that could not be harnessed by an individual’s will, which would not cease without reaching its destination—

And Audrey simply crossed that wall nonchalantly and approached this

place. That person dressed in formal Neo Zeon clothing, basked in cheers below her eyes, was not Audrey. To Banagher, that person was someone who took the appearance of Audrey and hid herself within; it was the appearance of a certain person called Mineva Zabi, someone he was unacquainted with.

The crew of the “Nahel Argama” was surrounded by the Republic soldiers cheering, and they stopped to look at Audrey—Mineva. The crew was slowly being moved to this mobile suit deck, and Banagher saw them separated into different platoons with their hands on their heads, their knees kneeling on the floor. The group of uniformed Republic soldiers had their automatic miniarms aimed at the Federation soldiers they held captive, shouting Sieg Zeon. Time felt like it reverted back to the old One Year Year, and Banagher felt goosebumps as he sensed that he was ostensibly thrown into a different timeline as he looked for Zinnerman amongst the countless faces on the deck.

He did not see Zinnerman ever since he was detained aboard the deck. Where was he? What sort of expression was he giving? Banagher looked around, but found no signs of the other man, and grabbed onto the railing tightly, only to suddenly sense a cold stare from behind.

He turned his head slightly, and saw the red uniform standing behind him. Full Frontal’s masked face remained unmoved as he stood with his back facing the cockpit of the “Unicorn”. It was impossible to tell if he was looking at Banagher as his eyes were sheltered by the light filter. It seemed that he had made contact with Zinnerman beforehand and brought the “Nahel Argama” into his dominion effortlessly. It was a chill Banagher had never seen before, of a completely different, one that gave an intuition that if anyone were to resist, he would act and take down his opponent without waiting for the escort squad beside him.

What sort of person is he? Banagher recalled the face with the mask removed he saw once on “Palau”, but he still had an impression of the masked face itself, and at the same time, he felt the railing on the gondola tremble slightly. Mineva Zabi grabbed onto the same railing as she descended down the gondola, looking at the deck as her mantle flapped with the wind. The moment she raised her right hand, the chants of Sieg Zeon exploded into cheers, and formed a quake-like tremor that shook the gondola.

“Long live Your Highness Mineva!” “May glory descend upon the Zabi family!”Mineva looked around at the cheering soldiers, waited for their

excitement to quell for a while, and then turned to look at Frontal behind her. *Audrey.* Banagher felt a voice in his heart calling out to her being deflected off and bouncing off the floor. He could only watch the side of that face that would not look at her. While the escort squad had their heels clasped together, Frontal stood in front of him, “It’s perfect.” and stepped forward.

“It’s certainly worth bringing a change of clothes. The morale of the Republic’s soldiers will rise now.”

Frontal stated calmly as the smile on his lips was the only expression he had. “You certainly are well prepared.” Mineva answered coldly, her eyes showing disgust as she seemed to be looking at an enemy.”

“I heard that the Char Aznable that led Neo Zeon in the past did not like having people act as symbols, isn’t it?”

“The man called Char may be such, but I’m just doing what I feel I need to do. Did you not change your clothes because you understood this, Your Highness?”

“You’re treating me like a fool here. Your attitude is the reason why I left the “Sleeves”…but it’s useless to talk further.”

Since it already ended up like this. In response to Mineva’s unstated words, Frontal still showed a smile on his face as he answered, “I’m intimidated.” Mineva looked away from the masked face, and then looked at Banagher for a split moment, but she looked back at the deck before Banagher could see her expression clearly.

“But is this alright? There are ECOAS members amongst the captives. These aren’t opponents the inexperienced Republic’s soldiers can handle.”

“I left the Garencieres team to watch over ECOAS and the important members of the crew. Please do not worry.”

“Then why did you gather everyone on this mobile suit deck? With the Republic’s ships supporting, you should be able to isolate and detain them separately.”

“It’s all according to the decision in our strategy. You do not have to worry, Your Highness.”

“Strategy…to inquire about the final coordinates of the “Laplace Box”?”

The decisive voice caused the smile to disappear off Frontal’s face. Banagher had switched off the generator before he was detained aboard the ship, so that the data of the Laplace Process would not be

called out. Mineva knew this, but what would this have to do with gathering the hostages here? As he inadvertently looked at Mienva, he subconsciously realized the term ‘hostage’, and his vision turned dark.

No way. He was driven by this impulse to yell in his heart as he glared at Frontal. The mask that was covered with shivers remained unmoved, “You…!” and as he exclaimed and stepped forward, an arm reached from behind and cuffed his neck, causing his body to be lifted off the floor and pulled behind.

“I’ve been waiting for this moment, Banagher Links…!”

This voice numbed his skin, and his abdomen had a gun pointed at it. Angelo Sauper’s voice felt just as moist as it was when he was following Frontal on “Palau”. “We can’t talk calmly here. Let’s move somewhere else.” Frontal said, and then disappeared from his vision. Mineva answered back with her glance, and her face then turned over to give a glance. Her emerald eyes were showing a little bitterness, ostensibly wanting to tell him something, but was that an illusion? Banagher’s windpipe was pressed halfway through as he let out a breathing voice, and he moved his hand in the air. His pressured nerves let out tears, and the back of Mineva got even blurry, causing him to feel regret.

Part 4[edit]

The mobile suit deck had the largest capacity inside the ship, and the ground space was the size of a school field. Even as 400 crew members were gathered here, it did not seem narrow, but it certainly felt abnormal to see so many people gathered in this place. At the end of its service, even if it was docked, this military ship would have people on duty, and there was no way all the crew could leave their areas—other than the moments when there was a huge hole that required evacuation from the ship, or when the ship was occupied by the enemy.

In fact, the method used by the Garencieres team was really superb. They started their raid on the armory the moment the Republic army began their assault, and took down all the important areas. There were no deaths simply because they were so fast that there was no chance of resistance. They probably checked through the inner workings of the “Nahel Argama” thoroughly through these 4 days, as well as its security. *Perhaps they offered the “Garencieres” to make us relax—or were Mineva Zabi’s words all an act?* Otto’s thoughts did not have focus as he suddenly felt hot in the head, and gritted his teeth as he looked at the “Unicorn”. He could only see the bottom of the gondola leaned at the side of the cockpit hatch at the abdomen, and he could

not see Mineva's expression there as he saw the white machine swallow its secret from the edge of his captain's hat.

The "Sinanju" was standing beside the Red Comet, and its dazzling red armor reflected the spotlights shining onto the deck. The purple mobile suit that seemed to be the unit of the escort squad leader brought back the two "Lotos" from the L1 Junction, and parked its bulky machine at the wall right in front of the aft. The machine that had the curves of petals had the same sense of design as the 4-winged placed in the maintenance deck below—the "Kshatriya". It stood with the Republic army's "Hizacks", and this was practically an exhibition of Zeonic mobile suits.

The crew gathered at the feet was assorted into platoons of 20, and they were forced to kneel on the floor. Each squad had 2 Republic soldiers watching over them, while the ones watching over Otto and the important crew members were the ones from the Garencieres team. Of course, their index fingers were placed upon the safeties of the Sub machine guns. Otto saw Flaste's unfaltering expression, and sighed as he turned to the partition wall at the aft end.

Conroy and the ECOAS that were brought off the "Lotos" had guns pointing at them from front and back as they approached. All of them were moving unsteadily, probably because their hands were tied behind their backs, and as they were in zero gravity, they would have to move with the magnets on the boots.

"That's weird."

Liam, who knelt down beside Otto, whispered to him softly. The latter looked over at her.

"To think that the ECOAS would be imprisoned here with us…it's not a good idea for them to gather us all in a single place. Logically, it'll be best to separate us to prevent us from colluding."

She let out a choking voice at the end, and lowered her face that seemed to be enduring the pain. They were in zero gravity, but blood fluctuation would not be smooth if they were to keep putting their hands on their heads, and there was a gunshot wound under the plaster slapped on her shoulder. "Does it hurt?" Otto asked softly, "The wound isn't much." And Liam answered quickly.

"But my body just feels like it's breaking. I'm feeling really peeved inside."

Otto recalled the side of her face when she yelled at the Garencieres team for being shameless and charged right at them when they

stepped into the bridge. The bullet merely grazed her shoulder, and Otto felt more fortunate than her in this sense. If there were deaths in the crew, he had no belief that he could remain sane as a Captain. “Don’t talk, you know.” Otto cringed his neck upon hearing the voice of the watchman, and then stared at the expressions of the crew he could see. It had been 2 hours since the occupations started, and no one had lost their cool yet, but nobody knew what would happen after this. Otto thought that it was time to ask about what the enemy was planning to do, and the moment he looked past his subordinates and stared at Flaste’s face, the latter looked behind Otto.

Otto looked behind, and saw Zinnerman dragging his leather jacket in the air. He passed by Otto and company from above, knelt down and landed splendidly, “I’ll leave the bridge to you.” He told Flaste, who nodded, and once the latter left the airlock, Zinnerman turned his expressionless stare back at him.

“Each group is to have a representative. Those who wants to head to the bathroom or is feeling unwell will have to raise it to the invigilators through the representative. Also, if anything happens, the representative will have to bear responsibility.”

He said monotonously, seemingly reciting a message. It seemed that the other groups had the same explanation as a few voices rang. “I suppose the representative here will be Captain Otto?” Zinnerman continued, and Otto glared back, but the former did not look at him. “The Neo Zeon fleet will reach us soon.” He continued,

“You shall be our prisoner from now on, and you’ll receive proper treatment. As long as you don’t resist, your lives will be assured. You are to obey our instructions until the fleet arrives—”

“Traitor.”

A voice came from someone, and Zinnerman closed his mouth as he was interrupted. Otto sensed the presence of the watchman raising the sub machine gun, and resisted to shout and turn to the person who called out. With everyone looking at her, Mihiro, who was on her knees, turned her upper body up, and glared at Zinnerman with an expression befitting her mini-tank nickname.

“It’s not like we fully trusted you, but Banagher did. Do you understand now? You betrayed the one person you shouldn’t have betrayed. That’s—”

Zinnerman remained silent as he merely drew his handgun from his waist, ceasing all words that followed. “Don’t move!” the watchman’s

voice rang, stopping Otto from getting up. Otto put his hands on his head again as he looked at Zinnerman, pointing his gun at Mihiro. *If he dares to squeeze the trigger, I'll bite his throat off even if I'm going to be riddled with bullets.* After a serious exchange of glances for several seconds, Zinnerman put down his gun and placed it back into his holster as nonchalantly as when he drew it.

"Trust is just like a gamble."

He lowered his head and muttered. The emotion that appeared in his eyes caused Otto to look at him with observant eyes.

"The result of a gamble is that the gambler has to pay the price. This is the rule, no matter how unreasonable it is."

ZInnerman lifted his head, and he showed the expression of a hardened soldier with all feelings wiped away. "This…!" Mihiro sounded agitated, but Otto stopped her with a hand signal, and then met Zinnerman in the eyes. "We'll obey the rules, definitely." On hearing this, Zinnerman's large eyebrows twitched.

"But he hasn't admitted defeat yet, right?"

Otto turned his sights to the "Unicorn" at the bow side's partition wall. Zinnerman stopped himself from turning his head, and his expression showed signs of wavering as he looked back. "Let's hope that both sides won't have any casualties again." Zinnerman muttered and turned away to leave, but Otto did not look at him as he stared at the gondola beside the "Unicorn" deck. He saw Mineva and Banagher follow behind Frontal's red uniform as the latter floated in the air, ostensibly wanting to move somewhere else as they went to the aft.

Part 5[edit]

The masked man leapt off the gondola and started to float around in space; though he was in front of them, he felt so unrealistic. He looked like Char during the One Year War, and the uncanny resemblance was such that he was ostensibly brought alive from a documentary. Takuya Irei's eyes were subconsciously attracted by this, and then saw Mineva leap off the gondola, followed by Banagher's white pilot suit. The Neo Zeon pilot sticking to Banagher from behind was most probably Full Frontal's escort team.

That hand was holding onto a recoilless handgun as it was aimed at Banagher, who was moving in front. The black hole of the barrel was leading to a hole of empty darkness. A shot from it could wipe off a person's life and turn the body into must. The terror of a Garencieres crew member aiming his gun at a person appeared in Takuya's mind

clearly again, and he clenched his trembling fist.

He had been living in a ship on active combat service for a month, and thought that he had more or less grew some guts in him, but the terror of being pointed at with a gun was another thing altogether. His body, which was already used to fighting back at AEIC, was unable to move due to fear. If not for the fact that they were in zero gravity, his legs would have collapsed, and he could have knelt down on the floor if the enemy told him to do so. The gun that was transferred to him together with antagonistic intent had such power; this little hole could remove him from the human world, and this unreasonable and cruel logic numbed his mind as he could not help but think of anything other than death.

Is that guy alright? He looked towards the group of people moving towards them slightly, “Banagher…” and immediately turned his head aside the moment he heard this weak voice. Micott did not notice his stare as she continued to look on at the white pilot suit approaching her. Haro, which was in her lap, remained silent as it could not sense its own approaching, making things unbearable. The Republic soldiers demanded that it was either to be confiscated, or to be shut down, and they naturally chose the latter.

Takuya may be rather open-minded about this, but Micott still had some affections for Banagher. She knew that this was unrequited, but she continued to live through this situation with such feelings. *And what am I doing now?*

To Banagher now, Micott and I are just two out of the 400 people on board the deck. We can’t rely on the adults around us, and Micott has to rely on me for support, but I can’t say anything that can make her relax. I’m trying using up all my strength just to support myself, looking at Banagher aimlessly—and putting my hopes in him. He felt gutless because of this, and bit his lips as a result. “Oi, Takuya.” At that moment, a hushed voice rang at his ears, and his heart throbbed in shock.

“I’ll create some commotion. Once I give you the signal, run to the hatch nearby.”

It was the voice of Jona Gibney. This man was the most experienced of all the mechanics, and was the representative of Takuya’s group as the mechanics were divided into three platoons. Takuya consciously turned his head around, “Don’t turn your head!” but a roar turned his tense face forward. He rolled his eyes to check the movements of the invigilators, “What do you intend to do?” he asked softly,

“They’ll pass by above us. I’ll get the Princess as a hostage, so use this opening to run to the Bow Thrusters engine room.”

“No way…! You’re get killed!”

“Those guys from Zeon view that Princess as the star of their hope. We can more or less buy some time here. Those guys from Zeon are all rookies.”

The invigilators were in pairs, and after every 30 minutes, one of the two would switch around. However, all of them were young and nervous. Mineva, who was approaching from above, would attract their attention to a point where they could not see two people whispering to each other. To Takuya, they looked like rookies too. “Do you know how to operate the Bow Bhrusters manually?”Gibney continued, and Takuya instinctively nodded its head.

“The thrust it creates will present ECOAS a chance to counterattack. You’re not a formal crew member, and it’s possible for you to sneak away even if you’re missing.”

“But…”

“We won’t know what’ll happen when we become Zeon prisoners. Can you endure seeing her being treated as a plaything?”

Takuya’s shoulders jerked slightly, and he looked at Micott sidelong. The latter probably realized his presence as she showed an uneasy expression on her face as she looked back, causing him to look away.

Banagher can’t deal with that much now, Gibney and the rest don’t have the time to care about such stuff. I’m the only one who can take care of Micott—he felt the burden Micott brought as she started to rely on him unconsciously for the past month, glanced at Gibney, and decided to take action. Gibney patted him on the shoulder and left from the back. The tense atmosphere of the mechanics around them reached Takuya, and it seemed that they were ready for this. “Takuya…” in the midst of this tense atmosphere, Takuya tried to look for an opening, and Micott looked at him with a nervous expression.

“I’ll be fine. Don’t move.”

“Don’t be reckless. We’re not soldiers here.”

“But Banagher isn’t…don’t worry, at least I can protect you.”

He did not look at Micott, who gasped for a short moment, and saw that the closest airlock was about 30m away. *They probably think that we can’t do anything just by breaking off our link with the higher-ups.*

There's no decent invigilation here, and the enemy doesn't have the manpower needed to keep a close eye on everyone in the ship. Once I leave the mobile suit deck, I'll find a way; it'll be fine. He tried to convince himself in his worried heart, "Erm, sorry, but I need the toilet…" a mechanic spoke up, causing Takuya's shoulders to jerk.

It began. "I told you that the representative is to say it." The Republic soldier answered with an adamant voice. "Ye-yes, what's the matter now?" Gibney got up while pretending to play dumb, and the Red Comet and the rest were about to pass by from above. "DON'T YOU STAND UP RANDOMLY!" the roaring soldier focused his attention on Gibney, while the other soldier was distracted by this commotion. At this time, the mechanics got into action,

Many hands quickly got into action to cover the mouths of the Republic soldiers, grab their automatic rifles, and pull them to the floor. Gibney too got up and knocked into Mineva who was around 10m above him. Frontal, who was leading the procession, turned his head around, while Banagher and the escort squad seemed dumbfounded as they panicked. "Hurry up and go!" However, Takuya did not have the time to check as someone's deep growl prompted him, and he kicked the floor in a dazed manner.

"Takuya…!" he turned his back on Micott, who cried out with a hushed voice, and let his body float to the airlock. "Don't shoot!" "Her Highness…!?" Takuya sensed the numerous voices, and the sudden noisy atmosphere of the deck pricked his skin as he gritted his teeth and focused on the door in front of his eyes. He thought he stepped off the floor with all his strength, but his body was not moving as fast as he though. He floated away at a distance not too far from the floor, and was about to touch the hangar in front of the airlock, but a gunshot caused him to miss his footing off the hangar.

He turned his body around, and the scene on the mobile suit deck appeared in his eyes. He saw many frozen figures, and the color of blood sprayed in the air caused his mind to turn blank.

The blood was wriggling like amoeba between Banagher and Mineva, who were showing shocked expressions. The trail of blood from Gibney's head formed a reddish-brown stain that appeared in the wide space. The blood trail split apart to form blobs of all sizes, and Gibney's body lost half its head, letting out blood as he spun in the air. On the other size, the man holding the handgun that was giving off smoke was—

"YOU BASTARD…!"

The sudden roar caused the time that stood still to crack. Full Frontal glanced at Captain Otto, who was restrained by the invigilator as he wanted to get close, and put the handgun that killed Gibney back into the holster. This action seemed like a code that caused many frozen figures to move. “Mechanic officer…!” “Petty Officer Gibney was…!?” The wails of the crew rang together with the call from the Republic soldiers, “Don’t you move! Anyone that moves will be shot!” There was a scream that came a moment later, *Is that Micott?* The moment Takuya thought of this, several Republic soldiers closed in on him and held down his floating body.

What happened next felt like a dream. Takuya felt pain in his twisted arm, but it was only a distant feeling. As he could not move a single finger, the scenery in front of him started to move. The inertia of the gunshot floated in the air, and Gibney’s corpse hit the wall with a heavy thud. “DON’T LEAVE YOUR DESIGNATED AREA!” “TELL SOMEONE TO BRING A BODY BAG!” The hollering Republic soldiers and the added invigilators pointed their guns at the kneeling mechanics. These figures passed by his vision, and Micott’s face was the only thing that explained everything. She hugged Takuya without saying anything, bringing him to some levels of normalcy. *Looks like I’m back to square one,* Takuya thought in his blank mind, and he looked over Micott’s shoulders and up at the scene above him.

Gibney’s blood was still floating in mid-air, and Banagher was held back by the escort squad from behind. “THERE’S NO NEED TO KILL HIM, RIGHT!? THERE ISN’T…!” the moment he shouted out, Mineva stood in the air, clenching her fist, “Are you hurt anywhere, Princess…?” and she did not look at the soldier asking her as he approached. “Deal with the body properly.” Frontal said, and the expression from her face vanished after she took a deep breath. She told the soldiers to back down, and descended to where they were.

The expression that was filled with an adamant will met his, and his dreamlike membrane was completely ripped off. It seemed that Micott sensed the abnormal atmosphere as she pushed her body away from Takuya and looked up. “Princess, you mustn’t!” However, Mineva ignored the loud plea from the soldier as she looked down at Takuya and Micott.

She looked around at the mechanics who were giving her hostile looks as the Republic soldiers pointed guns at them, and met Takuya in the eyes again. “This is really an unfortunate accident.” She let out a cold voice, causing Takuya to blink his dazed eyes.

“The same action will only lead to the same outcome. Please choose

your actions well. After saying that, Mineva reached her hand out. “Princess! You mustn’t reach your royal hand out like that…!” a soldier exclaimed from above, and Takuya, who looked at the outstretched hand, was about to hold it back, “As expected, you’re…!” but Micott’s voice caused his heart to jolt.

“YOU’RE AN ACCOMPLICE OF THOSE MURDERERS!”

Micott stood up and swung a hand at Mineva’s hands. Their bodies crashed into each other at this moment, “YOU!” before the soldiers above shouted, the Republic soldiers showed a marked change in expressions as they charged over. Before they could reach their hands out, Takuya grabbed Micott by the waist. Micott’s momentum as she left Mineva caused the duo to float in the air, and the mechanics formed a human wall to block them as he held his breath to cover her. “What accident! How is it…!” Takuya cried out in tears, and though he took a few punches from the struggling Micott, he let his body tense up as he covered this life in his arms.

“You bastards, move aside!” “There’s a limit to your insolence! Hand over that woman!” several Republic soldiers growled as they reached their hands out. “What are you saying when you killed Chief Mechanic Gibney!” “You’re the ones that got careless!” The mechanics hollered back, and at the apex of their argument, “Alright, that’s enough.” Mineva’s stern and regal voice rang.

“But…!”

“We deserve to be hit for what we did. Let’s go!”

She glanced over to them with her hand on her cheek, and there was a hidden meaning in that action. Once he saw Mineva kick the floor and float up, Takuya turned to look at the sobbing Micott. He could see the Republic soldiers sulk and leave, and brought his mouth to her ears, “Calm down, Micott.” He quickly said with a hushed voice.

“Just endure this for now. Look at your right pocket too.”

Micott’s drenched eyes widneed, and she separated from Takuya, ostensibly pushing him away. There should be no doubts about this; she hid something in her hand wanted to hand us something. The moment she scuffled with Micott, Mineva stuffed something into her chest pocket. *“Check it later.” Takuya warned Micott, who was inadvertently about to take it out, and lifted his head slightly to see Mineva laving.*

I don’t know how to deal with this situation, but I had to be careful with what she gave us. This thought injected life into his fear-riddled body.

He pulled the half-believing Micott close to him and hugged her shoulders. The bloody smell that was filled with the stench of grease told him how important this warmth that reached his hands was.

Part 6[edit]

Gibney's blood became irregular blobs that floated in the air, and floated up before disappearing due to the currents from the air purifier system. Some blood remained on the metal bars of the hangar, on the mobile suit deck that was practically his life, leaving behind a scar that could not be erased.

There was no hesitation at all—Banagher recalled the technique Frontal used to shoot through Gibney's skull, and glared at the back in front of him. Did he do it instinctively because of the incoming danger on Mineva? Did he believe that he had enough skill to shoot Gibney? Most likely not. Frontal never considered Mineva's life right from the beginning, and if that was not the case, he would not have fired without hesitation.

Gibney's corpse was already contained in the body bag, and was being transported out of the deck by the Republic soldiers. Banagher looked afar at the black bag that was expanded into a human shape, and blankly wondered what kind of person that man was when he was alive. He did not have a chance to talk with the man slowly, but his skills and instincts as a mechanic were top-notch. From Takuya and Micott's response, one could imagine that he was the kind of person who was very caring of others. Could those two remain calm now that things had become like this? Banagher looked down at Takuya and the rest below him; it had been a while since her scuffle with Mineva ended, but Micott did not look up. Takuya was beside her, clutching her shoulders.

Rage rose in him, and he had no way of venting them out. A ripping pain spread through his body. If he had not brought Zinnerman along, events would not have developed till this extent. Gibney would not have died, and those two would not be so terrified. Maybe there would be a different situation if he had taken Mineva as hostage…? Banagher floated listlessly as he was bound down by the bloody mess that could not be salvaged any further. "Don't dily-daly." Angelo growled as he twisted Banagher's arm from behind and poked his gun at the back.

"Don't give us any more trouble. The fates of the people here will all depend on your attitude."

He ostensibly felt a blade, and the icy feeling was finally resting at his

neck. Angelo looked back at Banagher, who consciously looked back, “You understand now, right? There’s a reason why we gathered the prisoners here.” His lips curled up,

“If you refuse to help us, we’ll release the air on this mobile suit deck.”

Banagher was already prepared, but the feeling of the blade pressed at his throat still hurt. Angelo continued to press it on the trembling Banagher, “Don’t think this is a mere threat.” He said to the latter’s ears.

“We follow up on what we say. If you don’t want them to suffocate, tell us the final coordinates of the “Box”.”

Angelo’s bloodshot eyes were looking back at Banagher, and there were more than 400 people who were not dressed in normal suits. Banagher’s body lost all life for sure this time as he let his numb body and mind drift amidst the mobile suit deck.

Part 7[edit]

It had been 5 minutes since the command for the entire crew to stand guard against the acceleration was given. The “General Revil” continued to accelerate, and Riddhe was at the aft, where all the air was packed towards, in the middle of this uncomfortable G force. He held onto the abnormal weight of the lift grip as he hurriedly passed through the long corridor. The lift grip at maximum speed reached its final destination, and he used the momentum to let the body float and reach the door of the bridge.

The “General Revil” was the largest cruiser of the Federation space army, but the bridge was not that ridiculously big. There were many mobile suit decks, so there were more operators on duty, and there were more monitors on the wall that even extended towards the ceiling; this would be the extent of its characteristic. Riddhe accepted the salute of the officer at the door and barged into the bridge. Captain Maseki looked behind to see the pitch black pilot charge in, looking completely lost; however, Riddhe did not look back as he approached that stout profile sitting at the commander seat. Before Alberto, who was tapped on the shoulder, could turn behind, “Uniform 007, path’s clear. Please launch.” Riddhe heard the operator say this, (Roger that) and a familiar voice rang through the wireless communicator.

(Nigel Garrett, U007, launching.)

The tremors from the bow of the catapult would not reach the bridge that was several hundred meters away. However, the jet flares of the “Jesta” that was launched could be seen clearly at the front. Before

Nigel's unit could light its thrusters in vacuum and make contact with the Base Jabber, (U008, ready for launch.) "Roger that, clearing course…) Daryl's voice rang through the communicator, and once the operator's voice rang, "What's going on now!?" Riddhe grabbed Alberto by the shoulder and asked.

"We spotted a flash from a battle at the 'L1 Junction'. It may have something to do with the "Nahel Argama"."

Alberto made a glance at Riddhe, and turned forward again. Maseki, who was seated on the Captain's seat beside them, was giving a questioning look with his eyes, asking who the person was, but Alberto did not respond as his slightly swollen face continued to look at the front.

"Even if we race there at maximum battle speed, the "General Revil" will only reach there half a day later. That's why I got the Tri-Stars to head out first and check it out."

"WHY NOT ME!?"

The sudden roar echoed, and it seemed that the cadres on the bridge were all looking at him. (Watts Stepney, U009, launching!) with the voice ringing through the communicator in the background, Riddhe continued to glare at Alberto.

Nobody told him that the acceleration was beginning. Even if there was a patrol rotation, Alberto should be able to use his authority to interfere. Alberto stared back at Riddhe, who was venting his complaints wordlessly, "Don't be so loud!" and hissed. He looked at Maseki, who pricked his ears, left the commander seat, and brought Riddhe to the back to the bridge.

"It may not be the "Nahel Argama". I told the Tri-Stars to launch because they're not part of the original forces here. Just wait for Lieutenant Nigel's report."

"The "Banshee" is also not in the standard team. If you need to scout it, I too can—"

"What can you do when you can't pilot the machine well? And can you work together with the Tri-Stars well?"

Alberto had witnessed Riddhe's altercation with Nigel, and was at a loss of what to reply. "It won't be beneficial to have the "Banshee" carry out battle for a long time." He left from beside Riddhe, and quipped,

"Once the moment arrives, I want you to leave even if you don't want to. Save your strength before that…and the atmosphere's weird too."

Alberto glanced at the main screen at the front and added on with a hushed voice. “Weird?” Riddhe repeated as he looked over at where Alberto was looking.

“There’s a ship that looks like the “Nahel Argama” and two others. Their affiliation is unknown because their signals vanished, but they haven’t been doing anything once the battle ended, just sticking beside the ‘L1 Junction’.”

The unknown ship markers shown on the screen were clearly not moving. The three markers were not showing any signs to indicate if they were friend or foe, but they were practically packed together and moving at the same velocity, overlapping the point that’s indicated as the ‘L1 Junction’. It seemed that they were jammed into the center of the Lagrange Point, the center of gravity between the Earth and the Moon.

“Something happened, but what…”

Alberto muttered as he looked at the 3 coordinates. The unknown anxiety spread across as Riddhe looked up at the screen too.

Part 8[edit]

In the ship that was devoid of people, the sounds of engines were the only things that could be heard. It had been approximately 2 hours after the occupation, but even the air felt foreign.

Of course, the Captain’s room in a corner of the gravity block was no exception. In this place that was filled with cold and silent air, Banagher, Mineva, Angelo and the red profile of Frontal were present. They were led here by the Garencieres team, and Frontal chose a place where they could talk quietly, the waiting room leading to the Captain’s room. The 4 cups of coffee were still giving off hot air, but nobody touched them. The positions of the captors and the captives were of no relation to the quartet present, and a short moment of silence descended upon them as their bodies sank in the gravity as time passed.

It had been a long time since he once met Daguza face to face. The bland instant coffee aroma spread around the room, replacing the fragrance of the red tea Otto prided himself in the last time Banagher took a drink from it. He let his body sink into the sofa and looked at the back of Frontal, who did not sit as he merely looked at the landscape painting, still giving off a presence that was not of a human. Perhaps the chilling atmosphere in this ship was a result of this man’s arrival.

“What Lieutenant Angelo said is the truth. We’re taking the crew of this

entire ship as hostages."

Frontal seemed to have detected Banagher's stare as he did not move while saying. Did Angelo tell him of this, or that he sensed that Angelo mentioned this before? Banagher was unable to tell as he wordlessly looked back.

"But it's not my intention to use hostages as shields to force you. You do have talent."

He turned around abruptly, and the stare from the mask remained unmoved. The anti-glare filter reflected a strong dazzling light, and Banagher, who was sitting on the sofa, tensed up.

"It's a talent we need. No matter what path you take after that, it'll be a waste to see a world dominated by the Federation bury such talent."

The hand with the white glove on it reached for the mask and took it off. The lush blond hair let out a flowing sound that overlapped with Mineva's breath, and Angelo, who took a step forward, let out a faltering breath. Banagher exerted strength into his abdomen as he looked at the face which had its mask removed.

"Will you assist me, Banagher Links? You have more worth than what you imagine yourself to be of."

The blue exposed eyes had an expression that was reading into other people's hearts as it looked right back at him. *He's not talking about 'us', but 'me',* this explanation caused Banagher to feel an unexpected weight, and he looked down at his clenched fists. He glanced at the glaring Angelo, and then looked at the overly handsome face in front of him, "…Why did you kill Mr Gibney?" he eked out these wods.

"Your ability alone can restrict his actions even if you don't kill him."

"You should be able to understand, right?"

The poker face was just like how it was with the mask on, and it was impossible to see what sort of expression Frontal was giving. "Make an example of others, am I correct?" Banagher immediately answered, "That's right." Frontal looked down at the former and showed a thin smile.

"This is the talent I said of you, to see through others like this."

"This is the talent of a killer, not a Newtype ability under Zeon Deikun's definition."

Banagher forgot the pressure surrounding him for a short moment.

“Who do you think you’re talking to, kid…!” Angelo growled and reached his arm out before Frontal could reply, and grabbed Banagher by the collar.

“What the Captain is saying is the responsibility that comes with the ability. What do you think will happen if that mechanic’s still alive? There’ll be more of the same things happening, and more sacrifices will be made. Those who have the ability to see the future have the duty and responsibility to deal with such things coldly.”

Even in low gravity, the arm strength to raise Banagher’s weight with one arm was not to be underestimated. The expression was filled with personal emotions, a stark contrast to the words that were just said, and Banagher felt a suffocating fear.

“You’re just running away from this responsibility, a fool who haven’t realized it at all.”

“I know that…! But so what about those people who think that they can see the future? They’re just like the dictators of the past or Char who threw an asteroid down onto Earth, it’s just a contest of who kills more here, right? My father who wanted to hand the “Laplace Box” to Newtypes…Cardeas Vist may be of the same kind as them!”

The strength disappeared from Angelo’s hand, “Father…?” and a surprised voice came out from his mouth. Banagher shook his hand off, stood up while staggering, and turned his stare at Frontal, who did not twitch his eyebrows in the slightest. “So if there’s really such a power, I have to be careful. I can’t just fall into despair myself; I need to find a way for everyone to coexist together—”

The door suddenly opened, causing Banagher to swallow the latter half of his words.

Zinnerman opened the door, stopped for a moment as everyone looked at him, and stepped into the room. He did not look at anyone, and his bearded face gave off a familiar odor; Banagher stood at where he was as he turned his face away. He had been concerned about something all this while, but the moment Zinnerman appeared, he was unable to say anything. There was a voice bellowing in him, telling him that it was useless of him to say this. The word despair felt so clear in him, and he felt the knees that were supporting him in his resistance against Frontal lose strength.

Did Char, Father, threw the asteroid down to Earth and wanted to open the “Box”, the source of this conflict because they felt endless despair? He was shocked by this thought flashing through his mind,

and was unable to find anything to argue back as he slumped into the sofa. With his back facing Mineva diagonally, ZInnerman looked at a corner of the room with all emotions gone from his eyes; Banagher again clenched his fists.

“…Anyway, I have no intention of helping Neo Zeon. If there’s a responsibility, it’s mine since I’m entrusted with the “Box”.”

“But we can say that since you say so, the hostages will lose their lives. What will you say about that?”

Frontal turned the old scar on his forehead as he answered. Banagher lowered his head.

“Your self-righteousness will kill many people. The outcome here will mean that you’re doing no different from Char and your father, right?”

The steady voice felt like a silk rope that was slightly choking his body and mind. If there were a devil in this world, perhaps this would be the voice he uses to mutter. Banagher was shocked by the blue eyes that were terrifyingly silent, and bit his lips as he could not argue back. “That’s enough of your act here, Captain Frontal.” However, an interrupting voice caused him to gasp.

“You want to ask me, right? Where the “Box” is.”

Mineva got up from her single-seat sofa and stared at Frontal’s face as she said this. The face that had been out of Banagher’s consciousness up till this point caused his sweaty fists to cringe as it forced itself inside his sights.

“Just ask honestly. It’s an indulgent act to try and actually make that boy speak for himself.”

She waved her arm, ostensibly not wanting the other man to argue back, and moved her knees and cape. The sweet aroma that floated by felt just like the one Banagher had a whiff of when their lips were close together in the cockpit. “I know where the final location of the “Box” is.” He blinked as Mineva said that, and though he knew, his heart jolted.

“I was in the “Unicorn” cockpit too, so I witnessed it personally.”

“About that…if you were willing to tell us, you could have avoided all unnecessary sacrifices, right?”

Angelo stood about as he spaced out, but Frontal ignored him as he let out a surprised voice. Mineva saw Zinnerman move his eyes, and looked back at Frontal, “But I have a condition.” And said with a cold

voice.

“What do you want to do with the “Laplace Box” once you get it? I want to hear your opinion on this.”

“Say it here, is it?”

“Right. Before you continue however, I don’t want to hear any rotten saying like reviving Zeon. The man who built relationships with the Zeon government and launched operations before the return of self-autonomy isn’t that simple.”

Once she finished saying this, Mineva showed a glint of straightforwardness in her eyes, a cruelty that made her different from her identity as Audrey. Banagher heard the throbbing in his chest and looked at Frontal. The face that was looking back at Mineva showed a human-like moment of hesitation on his face, “Alright.” He answered, turned to Mineva, but…

“However.”

Mineva immediately stopped him, passed by the front of the red uniform, and walked towards the communication panel on the wall. She proceeded to operate it and pressed the phone button at the bottom. “The conversation here will be leaked out to the ship.” She said as she turned to Frontal,

“Please say your real motive, Captain. If you really have conviction, how about you let the Republic soldiers hear it out?”

“This will also reach the ears of the Federation soldiers, and their freedom in the future will be heavily restricted as a result, you know?”

“They’re prisoners either way. If you really have such a belief in your values, Captain, someone may be willing to help you.”

It seemed that a sharp exchange of words was under way. Frontal saw that Mineva kept her poker face, and lowered his face. Banagher saw him, with both Angelo and Zinnerman looking, focus his blue eyes in space, and started saying while ostensibly not looking at this place,

“The Space Migrant Independence Plan up till this point is determined by the Federation’s willingness to grant self-governance. Without looking at the example of the One Year War, we can be certain that the Federation will definitely not agree with this. Then, there’s no need to wait for their approval. It is my opinion that we ignore them.”

Part 9[edit]

(Ignore…?)

(Besides me, Defense Minister Monaghan Baharov of the Republic too has the same idea. Why will the Federation not agree to the independence of Spacenoids? It's because Spacenoids are people who are abandoned in space. They feel that those are the descendents of those people who aren't needed to Earth, people who are inferior to them. The people inferior to them are calling for their independence, wanting to be of equal standing to them, and selfishly insist that staying on Earth is a crime. The Federation government comprised of Earthnoids will naturally not agree to such insistences because they knew that once they accept it, Spacenoids would not simply be of equal standing, but may even lose the initiative.)

The sudden broadcast in the ship caused every single person to lift their heads. "What?" "Isn't that the voice of the Red Comet?" The crew murmured to each other, and voices were overlapping, causing the ripples of wavering to spread amongst them. Otto, whose mind had been frozen in place ever since Petty Officer Gibney was killed, had a weak electric pulse in his mind as he looked at the invigilators around them.

There were some Republic soldiers looking blankly into the mobile suit deck or looking at each other; the Garencieres team too was using the wireless communicator to make contact. Upon seeing their doubtful expressions, he exchanged surprised looks with Liam, and then heard Frontal's voice,

(The reason is simple. The current Earth Celestial Sphere can't be established without Spacenoids. Energy, food, all economic activity is established by the 7 Sides and the Moon. In fact, the self-reliance can't support the 2 billion Earthnoids. In contrast, Spacenoids are self-sufficient even if they break away from Earth.)

The one who could conclude this as truth, this magical voice certainly belonged to Full Frontal. Upon hearing that voice that sounded just like the real Char, *What is this for?* Otto wondered. "It seems this broadcast's completely unexpected to the Zeon people as well." Another voice stunned him. Conroy, who got over unknowingly, showed his face from behind.

The members of ECOAS were gathered 10m away from the cadres. Conroy, who probably snuck over to them while the invigilators were not paying attention, did not give off any presence as he did not undo the restrain tied on his hands. Upon recalling their nickname as Manhunters, Otto suppressed the chill in his heart, watched the stare from the invigilators, and turned his head forward. "That's too

reckless...” he said with his back facing the other man. “Now’s a good chance.” Conroy answered with a hushed voice.

(The Federation will limit the authority the Spacenoids have and establish their authorities over the Side leaders, probably because they’re afraid of this truth. If all the Sides unit with each other, Earth will become a countryside that is without economic value. It will become a city with the shell of the Central Government, one without any sense of trustworthiness, a king going about naked. Zeon Deikun probably used this fact as a weapon. Once all the Sides unite together, establish an economic agreement, and exclude Earth, the Federation government will have no standing. He however was an outstanding thinker, and not a politician. The Zabi family is the same, twisting Zeonism and started a war of independence because of this. They never thought of the premise that the Federation had to recognize their independence, and can only use force to challenge.)

The nonchalant voice continued, and caused the Republic soldiers and the Gareniceres team to falter. Otto saw the invigilators focus on the wireless communicator and not look at them, and stealthily leaned his body over to Conroy. He saw the hands that were tied down by the metal wire, and deduced that it would be difficult to remove it. “You can’t undo it?” he asked quietly. “I can’t do it without a tool.” Conroy quickly whispered back.

(It’s the same for the two Neo Zeon Wars. As long as we don’t give up on making others recognize our existence, there will be no day of victory in our battle against the Federation. The Spacenoids has a huge weapon in that it supports the Earth Celestial Sphere’s economy. The reason why the Federation deliberately lets us “Sleeves” escape is because they need us to keep the gear called the military requirement running, and this is proof that the Earth economy alone is insufficient.)

Upon hearing this voice, “How radical.” Conroiy whispered. Otto looked over his shoulder to stare at the other man’s face.

“Those guys on the Garencieres are supporting the Zabi family, right? He actually denies thenm so firmly…they look like this is the first time they’re hearing this.”

Otto recalled that the invigilator calling through the wireless was Tomura. He then looked at Alec, who was holding a submachine gun as he looked up, not knowing what to do. “This is really a chilling thing to hear as a Federation person.” He honestly answered. The thought to use an economic war to strangle the Federation by the neck was something the battle for Zeonism never had in the past, and though it was easier said than done, it was certainly a more realistic plan than

using violence.

“But there's no warmth.”

Liam, who had been listening quietly, suddenly spoke up. Otto and Conroy looked at her in unison.

“While he’s talking about their future, he seems really cold and aloof. He sounds like a researcher observing an insect’s hive…what history does this man called Frontal have? He’s called the Second Coming of Char, but where is he from, and where is he headed to?”

Liam was not seriously asking as she looked into space, ostensibly facing a ghost. The chilly atmosphere spread around, and Otto focused on this overly calm voice. This cold voice ignored the faltering in the ship, and did not sound like a human as it rang through the tall ceilings of the mobile suit deck. The voice of the Second Coming of Char; the voice of someone who would kill his subordinates without hesitation—

(We’ll strengthen the relationship of the Moon and the 7 sides, and

fully exclude the center, forming a donut-shaped economic ring, a co-prosperity ring built around the Sides. As long as we don't ask for Self-independence, the Federation will not pay too much attention to the interactions between the Spacenoids. With the lead of the enterprises, each Sides will continue to build clauses and agreements that don't seem to have any problems on first glance. After that, we'll build a united ring with common diplomacy and security measures…)

Part 10[edit]

(Of course, this isn't something that can be accomplished in a day. Even if we aim to ally together, we need the existence of a leader.)

(And this is where the Zeon Republic comes in…Monaghan Baharov, right?)

A gentle woman's voice answered in response to the cold man's voice. Takuya knew that it was Mineva's voice, and was driven by his throbbing heart as he lift his head.

(I don't know if Minister Monaghan has any leadership qualities, but it was his proposal to have a Side co-prosperity ring, and only the Zeon Republic can form the basis of this. Perhaps quite a few people will feel repulsed by the name of Zeon, but Minister Baharov and I don't care about it. The important thing is to create a united body that allows the Spacenoids to fight against the Federation. The entrepreneurs and investors who are unhappy about Earth's squeezing system will most probably volunteer to assist once there is an opportunity.)

He heard the voice that continued on in a half-conscious manner, and held onto the paper that was drenched in sweat. The paper that had a few words scribbled on it was the thing stuffed into Micott's pocket during the commotion. He looked at the invigilators who were unable to calm down as they look at the ceiling, whispering to each other. "What do we do?" Takuya whispered. "I think we can trust her." Micott brought her face from close by and whispered.

"It's too unnatural, especially since she deliberately made her way to us."

"Maybe it's some trap?"

"There's no benefit for her to do such a thing to us, right? I know this well."

The strangely convicted words caused Takuya to glance at the side of Micott's face. She showed calm after exposing her emotions, and looked afar at a corner in space.

“A woman’s lie is different from a man; it will sting. She’s serious.”

Takuya was overwhelmed by the terrifyingly serious expression, and he looked to the front. Once he confirmed the feeling of a paper only Micott and he knew of, he repeated the words written on it, and lowered his stare at the stain on the floor.

Gibney’s blood was lying on the floor in a thumb-sized stain, a stain that could not be erased, that was prompting him to remain alert and calm. Even if he wanted to do so, he would have to act cautiously. He would first have to look for help. He looked around to see the depressed looking mechanics, fearful because of Gibney’s death. Once he saw that they would not do, he looked at the rest. The members of the other departments were also seated on the floor, listening to the broadcasting carefully. *There has to be someone who’s reliable here—*

Found one. Takuya spotted a man at a neighboring platoon, and nudged his elbow at Micott. The latter followed his trail of vision, saw the same man, and widened his eyes slightly. “What do we do?” she whispered back. “It’s not too far away. I’ll go over and come back immediately. It’s easy to get past their eyes.” Takuya answered as he looked around. There was a distance of 5m to the group of wounded at the wall. He glanced aside at the invigilator who forgot to watch over them, and gathered strength in his feet while not letting himself float.

Gael Chan’s face was looking into space, not noticing Takuya’s stare at all. The way he straightened his back and folded his feet reminded Takuya of a great-grandfather sitting down.

(The problem is that the Republic’s self-autonomy will have to be returned very soon. If it becomes the original Side 3 and is not allowed to have self-governance beyond its boundaries of author, the fad to create a co-prosperity ring amongst the Sides will not happen. Now, our problem here will be how to extend the deadline to this dissociation. At this moment, we received an invitation from the Vist Foundation, who wanted to hand the “Laplace Box” over to us…)

Part 11[edit]

“I don’t think that Cardeas Vist knew of our plan. He probably proposed to hand over the “Box” at this time because he hated having the Federation system remain like this while the Republic dissolves. It is common knowledge that the Federation hopes to end Zeonism before that happens.”

Just like how the destroyer installation of the fable of Newtypes, the

“Unicorn”, is showing. Frontal expressed these unexpected words as he suddenly looked over at Banagher, causing the latter to recover and look away.

Zinnerman and Angelo were at a loss of words, and even Mineva did not hide her overwhelmed expression. Frontal continued in a robotic and unrestrained voice that was scarier than the prosperity of the Side co-prosperity ring he was talking about, and Banagher looked back at him. It was weirder to see him say with such a serious look. *What’s with this supernatural atmosphere that doesn’t feel alive—*

“To us, it can be considered a blessing. This “Laplace Box” is said to be able to topple the Federation government…and if we can get it, we can ensure that the Federation will allow the Republic to coexist. If we ask for the revival of Zeon, the Federation may have no choice but to launch a full-scale war, but they may accept a request if we ask for a delay in the dissolving of the Republic. I thought it was worth a try, and wanted Zinnerman to head to the trading place, “Industrial 7”.

There was no need to ask about what happened next. Frontal did not show any fatigue from the long speech he made, and finished his words without any change in expression. Soon after the reception room became silent again, “I see. So that’s how it is.” Mineva spoke up, and she narrowed her eyes at Frontal again.

“What you wanted to get from the “Box” is time, Captain. You want to buy time to delay the dissolution of the Republic and develop the Side co-prosperity ring.”

“What you said is correct.”

Frontal immediately answered as he wordlessly prompted that it was her turn. Mineva did not answer as she sat back on the sofa and looked over at Zinnerman.

“Zinnerman, do you know of these?”

“No, I know that the sponsor of the “Sleeves” is Monaghan Baharov of the Republic however.”

Mineva followed Zinnerman’s stare at Frontal as she gave the latter an interrogating look. Frontal’s still body remained unmoved as he continued, “As I had explained, this is different from the old movements to revive Zeon. I was worried that a soldier like Lieutenant Zinnerman, who had been serving the Republic army wholeheartedly, would definitely refuse, so I withheld the important before that moment. I do apologize for that.”

“There’s no need to apologize. Once I heard everything, I felt that it’s all a stupid plan.”

Mineva answered with an adamant voice and pressed the call button on the communication button to shut it off. Frontal remained silent as he accepted her stare.

“Am I wrong? A co-prosperity ring of the Sides that excludes the Federation…instead of wanting to change the people who do not want to change, you want to ignore them. This is too distant from the dream of human renewal Zeon Deikun had. It’s too realistic and not cute at all.”

As Frontal stood without expression, Angelo showed an angry expression from behind. A killing intent that could shake the air raced through the atmosphere in the room, and Banagher’s skin under the pilot suit had goosebumps.

“It so different from the madness Char had when he wanted to turn Earth into an inhabitable planet and pull humanity up into space…even the passion levels are so different. Is this really good for the man who calls himself the Second Coming of Char?”

Mineva took a step forward as she looked up at Frontal. Her emerald eyes had a trace of heat in it, causing Banagher to sense that there was an unknown force of attraction between then.

“Once the Side co-prosperity ring happens, Earth will be isolated. The economic gap in space will increase, and like what it implies, the roles of ownership will reverse. In this case, Earth will have a replay of Anno Domini again. Earthnoids will quickly develop Earth again to support their economy. In this new era, those who grow up under poverty will try to plan revenge on Spacenoids; just like how Zeon started the One Year War.”

Frontal did not say a single word. As she faced the tall figure standing beside the red wall, Mineva continued with a clear and emotional voice,

“There’s no reconciliation, no innovation, just a future that lets the strong fight the weak…do you really think this is good? Do you, a man who decided to stand in front of others again, feel that this—”

“It’s not a question of good or bad any more, but that this is the world of humanity at work.”

The interrupting voice caused Mineva’s body to ostensibly shudder for a moment. Frontal reached his hand for the mask on the table, and

said,

“I said before that I limit myself as simply a vessel. A vessel won’t think, but will only act based on the consciousness humanity implants in it.”

The mask giving off a silver gloss covered his face again. Mineva lowered her face slowly as she saw the masked face seem so distant from her as there did not seem to be any resonance amongst them, and her eyes were showing signs of faltering, “…Is that so.” Her tone had a flair of despair in it, and Banagher felt a slight ache in his heart.

“So the Char Aznable I know of is truly dead.”

These leaked words caused Zinnerman’s eyebrows to twitch. She turned her back on the wordless Frontal and sat down on the sofa. She closed her eyes, let out a sigh of probably disappointment, and her caped back sank deeply into the sofa.

““Industrial 7”, the colony builder “Magallanica”.”

Mineva spoke as she opened her shut eyes, and the melancholy from before vanished from her face. She did not look at Banagher, who clenched his fists, and continued calmly,

“That’s the final coordinates indicated on the Laplace Box.”

While Zinnerman and Angelo were taken aback, “Oh—” Frontal looked over at Banagher, who looked away; once the stare through the anti-glare filter gave a confirming look for a moment, he turned his masked face back at Mineva.

“Thank you very much. Once we rendezvous with the fleet again, we’ll immediately change our course and head for “Industrial 7”.”

“Whatever you do.”

Mineva hissed as she got up from the sofa. She did not look back at Banagher, who lowered his head, and her leather boots-clad feet advanced to the door. Banagher felt each step prodding at his chest, ostensibly testing his will, and he clenched his fists hard while remaining silent.

“Where are you going?”

“You have heard from Zinnerman before, right? I was saved by that boy quite a few times.”

She stopped in front of the door, and looked back at Banagher for the first time. The latter then lifted his head slightly,

“It’s really weird to betray a benefactor like this. Allow me to act freely after this.”

He was unable to look back at those emerald eyes in time as she turned her head away and left the room. Frontal saw the door close, and turned his stare to Angelo, saying, “Make sure the security is tight throughout.” Once he finished, he left the landscape portrait. “Yes.” Angelo got into a proper posture, gave Banagher a glance, and touched the handle to the door that was just closed. Once the back with the intent to watch over Banagher left the room, Frontal let out a sigh and sat on the sofa opposite Banagher.

“Allow me to ascertain, Banagher.”

The voice was as steady as before, but there was a toughness in the words that demanded for unconditional agreement. Perhaps it was because Mineva had revealed the location that there was no need to play any word games like assistance. Banagher looked back at the mask wordlessly.

“So the starting point is the end point; that’s certainly a classic way to fool us. It seems your father really has quite the sense of humor.”

“That’s not it!”

Banagher’s voice rang as he inadvertently called out, causing the coffee on the table to form ripples. He got up from the sofa suddenly and excluded the metal mask from his eyes.

“The final destination can be any point. What I see, what I feel before I reach it…that’s the most important thing. Even if we know the answer and reach the destination, the “Box” may not open. If it’s not someone who went through the same path and shouldered the same burden…”

He uttered out the last line while turning his face at Zinnerman. The latter’s expression wavered as he did not say anything and glanced aside. Frontal’s stare did not look away from the rooted Banagher however, “Only those who know the hard work of a journey can find the bluebird that left home.” He recited.

“That’s rather classic too.”

The twisted lips curled up, and it seemed that the entire mask was making a mockery. Banagher did not want to say anything else as he looked away.

Part 12[edit]

Another hour and so on passed after the unexpected broadcast aired

to everyone, and the mobile suit regained its moment of lull. The soldiers at the wall near the starboard started to create commotion, and Gilligan moved his mouth away from the straw of the nutritious jelly.

“What is it?”

“It’s one of the guys who created the commotion with the rest of the crew. He says that his stomach’s hurting, and the army doctor’s now looking at him.”

The soldier ran to the briefing room on the neighboring deck, panting as he reported. “Stomach pain?” Gilligan asked back as he looked at the monitor showing the scenes on the mobile suit deck.

The briefing room had many monitors on the wall, and at this point, had become the restroom cum command room for the Republic army. The time was noon, and it was 4 hours into their occupation. The broadcast from before caused all personnel to tense up, but the captors and captives were certainly starting to tire. The witnessing of a prisoner being killed directly seemed to have brought about an unexpected amongst of pressure to everyone. Gilligan too felt jumpy about having to wait, “I’ll go take a look. I’ll leave the rest to you.” He said to the subordinate and went off to the mobile suit deck.

Under zero gravity, the effects of someone standing or lying were the same. He checked the faces of all the Special agents, saw that no one was lazy enough to fall asleep, and approached the group in question. There was a crew member in the middle of a group of men dressed in overalls, probably mechanics, clutching his stomach and struggling, and he looked young enough to be a teenager.

The doctor in white cloak was listening in with the stethoscope. “What is it?” Gilligan asked, and the doctor took off his stethoscope, saying,

“I think it’s a cardiogenic symptom, but his pain isn’t normal. I want to use the infirmary.”

“We have soldiers here for escort. If it’s just a stomach pain, we can handle it.”

Gilligan could not ignore the possibility that they were planning something, and he looked straight at the slightly tanned face of the doctor who seemed to be of Arabic descent as he spoke with a refusing tone. “I think he has a chronic illness.” a female crew member beside the boy then interrupted with a stiff tone,

“I think it’s some medical term that’s hard to describe, but I did hear

that we must be careful if his stomach starts to hurt again…"

"Why in the world is such a guy a crew member?"

"We aren't crew members, just civilians who got involved in the battle of "Industrial 7" and are unable to return home."

There's such an issue? Gilligan looked back at the crew member who could be described to be a teenage girl and the ball-shape gift robot in her hands before looking back at the doctor. The moment the doctor was about to speak up, "Don't talk too much, hurry up and bring him to the infirmary." another voice rang from behind, causing a ripple in the surrounding air again.

"A Republic soldier who only knows about military training can only refuse anything that's beyond your expectations, right?"

A bald man in pajamas was gathered with the wounded beside them, showing a teasing smile as he got up. Gilligan felt hot in his chest as he took a direct hit in his weak point, and turned towards the man as he put his hand on the handgun on his waist. "Oi, don't just stand up like that!" The invigilator Petty Officer growl as he raised his rifle while approaching the man.

"Think of how the prisoners feel about being watched over by amateurs. If you can't make decisions on your own, go ask the "Sleeves" on what to do then. Ask them with those cool capes of yours."

"Damn you…!"

The Petty Officer's expression changed drastically, and he slammed the stock of the rifle into the man's abdomen. Gilligan was unable, and did not want to stop the Petty Officer; he saw the man float into the air because of recoil. The man bent back and writhed as he took the hit in the abdomen while the torso of his pajamas revealed the bandages. At this moment, Gilligan recalled the term 'wounded' he forgot, and his heart jolted. "How can you do such a thing…!" the army doctor ran over to the man.

He, with the help of the group around them, let the man lie on the floor, and opened the torso in front of the pajamas. "Not good, his wounds seem to have opened." The Petty Officer backtracked upon hearing the army doctor's voice. *What do I do?* He was implicitly showing this question on his face as he looked back at Gilligan. "I'll bring them back to the infirmary. Is that alright?" The doctor continued, and Gilligan took this sharp stare from him, *hold it* swallowed these words he nearly uttered out, and looked around.

The wounded were at the feet of the Petty Officer waiting for instructions, looking back with unhappy looks on their faces. The other groups have realized the commotion going on as they looked over, and the soldiers watching over them were showing obvious signs of doubts. If he were to refuse here, there would probably be an insurgency. *A commander must not show signs of hesitation.* Gilligan recalled this ancestral teaching and nodded to give the military doctor his approval. The doctor then carried the man immediately, “That boy needs to come too. Help out here!” The doctor growled as he kicked himself off the floor. Since there was no time to wait for soldiers to come in on active duty, Gilligan could only carry the boy who was clutching at his stomach.

“Lieutenant…”

“I’ll go along with them. Make a call through the wireless communicator and tell 2, 3 people not on active duty to head over to the infirmary.”

“Right. What about the contact with the sleeves?”

The Petty Officer asked without any show of respect, causing Gilligan to feel the heat rise in his chest again. “You’ve heard the broadcast just now.” He said as he glared back at the young Petty Officer.

“We’re the vanguard of the “Wind’s Assembly”. The “Sleeves” soldiers here don’t even know of the Side co-prosperity ring. There’s no need—to ask them for instructions.”

Unlike the Garencieres team that’s comprised of guerillas, the men of the “Wind’s Assembly” is comprised of the elites nurtured under Lord Monaghan. There’s a lack of experience, but our position is definitely nearer to the top. He recited these words to his pride that was somewhat wounded, and went straight to the nearest airlock. “It hurts…” the boy groaned, and the girl with the toy robot followed form behind.

Gilligan followed the army doctor carrying the bald man by the soldier, and got up to the elevator leading to the gravity block. Gilligan carried the boy beside him and drew the handgun at his waist. Gravity started to occur in the descending elevator, and he let the boy down onto the floor as the latter felt heavy.

The gravity he had not felt for a long time seemed to have caused the blood surging in his head out of tension and excitement to fall. *Am I being too reckless to go along with them alone?* He felt the difficulty of wielding a handgun in gravity and muttered in his heart. *It’s always like this. I always thought that I can’t be too indecisive here; that’s why I*

keep making shallow decisions. I guess it's because I was always sick when I was little, and was teased by my classmates for being unable to catch up. He thought and tapped his head twice to stop his consciousness from leaving. (Haro!) Gilligan heard this line that he should not be hearing at this time, and turned his head around.

The round discs that looked like ears flapped about, and the toy robot in the girl's hands floated in the air. *The power's not shut off?* Gilligan said, and noticed the girl's expression looking behind him at the same time, but it was too late before he could point the handgun behind.

A hand moved at a speed blurry to the eyes as it grabbed the handgun, while another hand grabbed the collar. The face of the bald man was right in front of Gilligan. "You…!" The latter let out a suffocated voice, but the impact that exploded between the legs made him unable to breathe.

GRAK! Once the man heard the groan, he slammed an elbow into the back of the head, causing Gilligan to lose strength in his knees. Gilligan's vision quickly turned dark, and his head hit the elevator door. They probably reached the destination level as the electronic sound rang afar while he was losing consciousness.

"I'm Gael Chan of the Vist Foundation. Remember the name."

The elevator door opened as the man's voice rang. Gilligan wanted to grab the communicator on his waist, but missed as he collapsed onto the floor. "Welcome back, Haro!" The girl exclaimed. (Charge!) The toy robot answered as it started jumping forward, and the sound of the men running out passed by from above. The toy robot hit the back of Gilligan's head and hit it like a platform in a way not considered a final hit. Gilligan's consciousness fell into a black abyss, and he heard the noise of his classmates calling him a scaredy-cat in it.

Part 13[edit]

The gravity was a weak false one made to match the Moon's, but to a body that had been used to zero gravity, it felt like there was a dumbbell on the shoulders. Takuya ran into the long arching passage, and fell forward onto the floor; his body felt like a lead block, and he cautiously ran down the corridor. He followed Gael, who would stop at every cross junction to see if there was anyone around, and went to the infirmary together with Hasan and Micott.

If possible, bring Doctor Hasan along and head to the infirmary—the note rolled into a bundle was the basis supporting their actions here. Gael leaned on the wall in a way not affected by gravity at all, held the

handgun he stole from the Republic soldier with both hands, and prompted Takuya to stand in front of the infirmary. The moment Takuya was about to open the infirmary, there was a sudden pain that caused him to bend and clutch at his stomach.

“What is it?”

“I’ve been pretending to be in pain, and now I’m really in pain…”

Takuya was hoping that Micott put her hand on his back, “Idiot.” but she simply answered back. Takuya frowned for a reason other than the pain as he knocked on the infirmary door. Once he was certain that there was no reaction, he exchanged nods with Gael and opened the door. He looked around the infirmary that had some antiseptic smell in it, and the moment he stepped in, “Who is it!?” a shout shook his head.

The man was exchanging looks as he stood at the ICU door linked to the infirmary. The pilot suit with the Neo Zeon emblem definitely belonged to that of the “Sleeves” escort squad. Takuya was immediately dumbfounded, *Is this a trap after all?* the moment he thought about it, “Emergency patients, didn’t you hear?” Hasan said as he stepped into the room and gave an intense stare at the escort squad member onto a doctor would have. If it were the Republic soldier from before, he would be overwhelmed by this stare, but this escort squad member did not let down his guard at all as he continued to point his gun at them, not moving at all. “Hold on, let me check.” The soldier answered and reached for the wireless communicator on his waist. Takuya and Hasan casted side glances at each other.

Gael had fighting skills that were no inferior to a soldier, but he was wounded. It seemed that there was no chance to launch a stealth attack on the escort squad member who would fire without hesitation. At this point, Gael did not even have the time to turn his head and look into the room, and Takuya continued to exchange stares with the escort squad member who was not letting his guard down. Suddenly, there was a black shadow behind the soldier. Bonk! A dull sound echoed through the room.

The escort squad member took a hit in the back of the head, and his legs went limp as he fell forward due to gravity. Gael immediately charged in and got onto the soldier, but Takuya did not see what he was doing. He merely stared at the person standing at the infirmary door, blinking blankly. Hasan and Micott, who followed in after Gael, showed the same response.

Mineva Zabi. At the moment he muttered her name, she dropped the fire extinguisher in her hands and ran over with her cape flying. She

reached her hands and grabbed both Takuya and Micott. One could hear her racing heartbeat from the compressed chest.

“Thank you for believing in me…!”

After hugging them tightly, she brought her body away from them. Her slightly moist emerald eyes were different from those of Mineva Zabi’s cold and ruthless aura. She resembled the girl Banagher called Audrey, and she had the eyes of the girl they met in “Industrial 7”. After exchanging doubtful looks with Micott, “Ah, no…” Takuya scratched his head, but at this moment, “What do you plan to do next?” Gael asked. They spotted him pull the wire from the wire gun to tie the hands of the escort squad soldier from behind, and Mineva suddenly looked back at Takuya with a serious expression.

“Mr Takuya, you just had a plan with Petty Officer Gibney over something, right? Please execute it.”

Takuya’s mind recalled the last expression Gibney showed when he said that they were to activate the bow thrusters manually, and gulped in response. “Doctor Hasan, please return to the mobile suit deck and untie all the ECOAS members.” Mineva turned her sights at the doctor and said with a calm voice,

“Just hand the pliers over to one of them. They should be able to handle the rest themselves.”

“It’s too dangerous. The Republic soldiers may not be as sharp, but the people of the “Sleeves” will immediately realize the anomaly here. If they release the air on the deck…”

Gael said. *Release the air to make them suffocate*—Takuya understood the reason why the crew was gathered onto the mobile suit deck, and gave a pale look as he exchanged looks with Micott. “That’s why we have to be fast.” Mineva answered with an adamant voice and looked back at Gael without any signs of backing down.

“Please proceed on to save Banagher, Mr Gael. According to what I heard over the radio, it seems that he was moved to the detention room below.”

“Understood…what about you?”

The face that seemed experienced in dealing instructions to others showed hesitation for the first time. “I’ll be working together with another comrade.” She said with a somewhat lowered voice, and suddenly turned her head over. Takuya and the others looked over at the curtain that was blown up, and passed through to the door of the

ICU.

The curtain was pulled aside, and once he saw Mineva's expression as she lowered her head to look at the bed, he deeply realized the weight of the term comrade. "She's…" Takuya heard Micott's whisper, saw Mineva not look at others in the eyes, and turned his face at the female Neo Zeon pilot lying on the bed.

He remembered that her name was Marida Cruz. Her sleeping face was so beautiful it was dazzling, to a point where he could not believe she was the pilot of the four-winged mobile suit. "Doctor Hasan." The adamant voice caused Takuya to lift his head.

"Please make her wake up. Inject as much painkiller you think she needs so that she can continue to fight."

Mineva said this while looking at Marida, and Takuya, Micott and even Gael gasped as they looked at the side of her face. "But…" Mineva did not look back at Hasan, who expressed such doubt, "I'll bear all responsibility." She continued forcefully, lifted the hand of the still-sleeping Marida, and immediately knelt down on one leg.

"Mairda, it's me, Mineva Zabi."

She cupped the hand in her hands and brought it to her forehead, lowering her head in a prayer-like manner. The troubled presence seeped from her shoulders, and Takuya sensed Hasan return to the duty office from behind him.

"I know this is too much, but I hope that you can wake up. We need to fight against the monster born from our grudges. I need your power; please fight with me to prevent Zinnerman from making more mistakes…!"

The voice that was eked out passed through the caped back, causing the air to tremble. The eyebrows on Marida's still face twitched slightly, and the fingertips cupped by Mineva moved a little.

Part 14[edit]

"Understood. Bring a few men from the Garencieres and head over. Don't let the Republic soldiers know…right, I'll leave it to you."

The red uniform finished the call with Angelo, and the large body facing the communication panel looked back at Zinnerman. His attitude and the masked face were still suspicious to a point where one would want to keep staring at him. "It seems we lost contact with the guard keeping watching over Her Highness." The voice sounded like an act, and Zinnerman gave a look at Frontal, not even bothering to give a

surprised look.

“It seems the last point of contact was at the infirmary. Do you have any clues?”

“No.”

Marida’s face appeared in his mind, but in his current state, he could not think of how Marida would be involved in this current situation. The atmosphere alone with Frontal was remarkably lull ever since Banagher was brought away from the reception room, and Zinnerman felt that he was imprisoned by some fatigue. Even though he knew that he could not relax too much, he had a sense of fatigue telling that nothing mattered, that anything goes at this point. He admitted that he was tired, and that it was not the uneasiness of betrayal of the pain of the conscience pricking him. All that had been done here was making him tired, the several hours that passed since the occupation started, the one month they spent chasing the “Box”, the 16 years after the war, everything—

“I do apologize sincerely for hiding the Side co-prosperity ring from you.”

Frontal was seated at the sofa in front of Zinnerman, sounding as if he had realized what Zinnerman was thinking. The latter lifted his tired eyes.

“But I never thought of betraying the agreement to have Her Highness Mineva be the leader. I said that I don’t care about the name of Zeon, but the Zeon Republic is the only one that can be the leading country in the Side co-prosperity ring. Once we pave the path, we can make Her Highness be the leader. This is a huge position neither Minister Monaghan and I can take up.”

It was a fact that they agreed as a condition to view Mineva as the princess when Zinnerman affiliated himself with the “Sleeves”, but at this situation, he started to feel that it did not matter at all. Mineva was need to gathered the efforts of all the people related to the Principality, but she had no other value. It was the same whether she was involved in the Sid co-prosperity ring, but there was a role she could take up if there was a need. Zinnerman had no strength in hating Frontal for this implication and looked away from the masked face. “You’re not interested, right?” These words came in at this moment,

“That’s fine too. It’s because you’re like this that I let the Garencieres team act freely, Captain.”

“…What do you mean?”

“Since you were entrusted with the child, you naturally wanted to protect Her Highness, and you have the sense of responsibility to your own subordinates. But those are mere responsibilities; you never had any particular interest in reviving Zeon at all. You hated the Federation with a vengeance, but you know that this isn’t a grudge that can be cleared completely just by taking revenge.”

The eyes covered by the anti-glare filter did not seem to be reflecting light, and Frontal let his body rest on the sofa’s back.

“And thus, even if it was for a moment, you were on a Federation ship. But as time passed…no, from the moment you stepped aboard this ship, you felt that you couldn’t erase your hatred, and you did what you had to do.”

The hand reaching for the coffee was trembling. Frontal did not let Zinnerman’s eyes escape as the latter drank the cold coffee, and continued with a smile on his face,

“Activists succumb easily as they’re used to justifying themselves. However, for people like you, captain, who don’t harbor much hope in humanity and the world, it’s hardly for you to succumb because you aren’t fixed. Once you understand the innermost self within you, you’ll be the most reliable partner.”

The hands in white gloves closed up at the knees, and Frontal finished his words with an unchanging cold tone. There was no room to interject, and upon hearing this self-analysis even he could not explain, Zinnerman first showed a smile. But he did not have the courage to laugh it off; he looked into his barren inner heart while pretending that it had nothing to do with him, “You seem to be saying…that you’re the same type as well.” He answered with a hollow voice. Frontal still had a thin smile on his face, but did not answer back.

“How do you actually feel deep inside, Captain?”

“What do you think?”

“Well…I’m not very good at such word games, but I did hear of a rumor before. It was said that when the Second Neo Zeon War was about to break out, Supreme Commander Char’s plan to send a nuclear winter onto Earth was just incidental. His real intent was to fight his sworn enemy since the One Year War, Amuro Ray, and have a decisive battle.”

There was no need to play along with his pretense. Zinnerman knew very well that the moment he said it out, their relationship would never be the same again, but he still chose his words carefully. “Oh?” Frontal

merely made a short reply as he kept his unmoving expression.

“I understand how he feels. He has an enemy he wants to beat, an opponent he can vent his frustrations on to feel fulfilled. He can forget his despair by chasing after the enemy. But Amuro’s dead, and Supreme Commander’s Char’s uprising was turned to nothing, yet the Earth Celestial Sphere had not changed. Even if he were still alive, what does he want to pursue this time? There’s nothing for him to compete again. The ideals of Zeon Deikun became something not worth believing. What does a sad man who felt despair for the world and humanity feel deep within him—”

“Isn’t this the same as you, Captain?”

Frontal immediately interrupted Zinnerman and got up. The lips under the mask were clearly stiff, and though Zinnerman felt that there was a sense of emotion there, he did not want to confirm as the tall and burly turned away to look at the landscape portrait on the wall, and let out a sigh. In the end, he felt the weight of the words he said return back to him. “Grudges won’t vanish…” he muttered.

His hatred for the Federation, hatred for the who that was unwilling to change, hatred for himself as he was unable to do anything—the hatred he had when his wife and child felt terror and despair as they laid dying. He wanted to crush the emotions rising up in him, but was unable to do so, “It’s true that vengeance won’t disappear that easily.” Zinnerman said as he subconsciously looked at his weak hands.

“But sometimes…I do feel tired too. It’s not emptiness, but simply tired. I’m just wriggling in the darkness, having given up on everything…”

And thus, he accidentally reached his hand out. Even though he knew that he could not handle it once it reached him, he was still attracted by that irreplaceable light. Marida, Mineva, Banagher; he saw the light remains of these names under his eyelids, and his face was contorted as he was unable to make a self-depreciating face. “That’s to be expected for a man.” Frontal said with his back turned.

“If Char Aznable is still alive…perhaps he’s no longer human?”

The line that was thrown out was stuck at the chest, causing the icy air to scatter, and Zinnerman inadvertently looked up.

The red profile giving off an inhuman presence looked like an ornament decorating the landscape portrait as it floated in front of the wall. *No longer human—this isn’t a metaphor, ‘what exactly’ is this man? He’s right in front of me, but he doesn’t seem to be here; it doesn’t feel like this man’s breathing the same air as me, and where in*

the world is he born in anyway? Zinnerman started asking himself while ostensibly being driven by fear, but got an answer that Frontal may not be from this world, and felt goosebumps all over. *Impossible, this isn't possible.* He wanted to laugh, but his stiff cheeks could not move, and the moment he clenched his fists that were about to tremble, the coffee cup on the table started to rattle as it ostensibly took the tremors from the fist.

Frontal turned his head in surprise as he heard the rattling of the porcelain. After that, a tremendous sound of impact rang from the floor, and all the coffee cups were thrown into the air. The table bounced up, covering Frontal's body, and even the sofa was floating. Before he could get down for cover, Zinnerman tumbled onto the floor.

Part 15[edit]

This was not an impact that one could brace himself for, and the sound of the ignition was deafening; it caused an added burden to the bodies of the prisoners to inertia, and Takuya fell onto the floor of the engine floor. Micott, who fell onto the floor as well, let out a scream, while Haro dropped out from her hands and bounced around the narrow room. This was not a moment for Takuya to lift Micott up as he tried to move his mind that was sticking onto the floor, and he looked over at the console that had countless working lights on it.

The control panel for the thrusters on the bow filled the entire wall, and the thrust sign was flickering on the movement monitor. The bow thrusters near the front end were an installation used when the ship's moving in reverse or decelerating. It was originally an automatic control that could be operated from the bridge steer, but it could be manually controlled at the maintenance engine room like this.

After 10 seconds of full speed thrust that was beyond the safety limit, the redirection nozzles let out another flare. An acceleration force of more than 1G lifted the "Nahel Argama" by the bow, and the ship was lifted by the bow thrusters that changed angles, creating a spinning effect due to the uneven inertia. The ship became a washing machine, and whether ECOAS could use this chaos to create a chance for counterattack—nobody would not after this. Takuya was about to reach his hand for Micott lying at the floor, but he was shocked by the sudden alarm.

It was the alarm indicating incoming impact, and the sharp siren common in all space ships echoed through the suppressed vibrations. "Not good…!" Takuya inadvertently muttered. "What's going on now!?" Micott asked, but there was no time to give her an answer. Takuya climbed up to the console and brought his face to the action

surveillance monitor. Once he was certain that the bow thrusters were changing its thrust direction based on his input, he switched the image of the monitor to the outside for visual. As the silver stars were moving horizontally on the screen, the moss green ship floating in space was shown on it, and Takuya widened his mouth once he saw that they were getting close.

“It’s a Zeon ship! We’re going to crash!”

Its unique shape resembled a high-heeled shoe, and it certainly was the Republic army’s Musai Kai-class cruiser. He knew that they were nearby, but he did not think that they were so close to a point where they could actually attach a bridge next to each other. “Can’t we stop!?” Micott exclaimed, and Takuya ostensibly lost himself as he looked at the console. The bow thrusters started to let out a second, and he was thrown into the ceiling.

After a tremendous impact from behind, he was thrown back to the floor because of the recoil (Danger! Danger!) Haro showed as it floated from behind the back of the head, while Micott, who was thrown into the air, floated towards the console. Takuya bent over to grab her clothes at the shoulder, yanked her back with all his strength, cupped her head with his hands, and closed his eyes shut as he await the next impact.

The floor, ceiling and walls surrounded them as they floated helplessly, spinning around in a dazed manner. *The ship might hit the Zeon cruiser from the head, and this engine room will be thrown into space as well, but even so, I mustn’t let go of my hands, definitely not.* He told himself as he used his entire body to embrace the warmth in his arms. Micott’s arms were wrapped around Takuya’s back, and she brought her cringing head into his chest. As the heat from the outside mixed with the body heat, a quake that made everything before seem tame in comparison overwhelmed their senses, and the impact passed through the engine, ostensibly dislocating the bones.

Part 16[edit]

The starboard of the “Nahel Argama” crashed with the Musai Kai-class cruiser “Dromi” beside it. Its bow was suddenly lifted and spun at the “Dromi” in a large arc as it was directed by its bow thrusters with its nozzles redirected, causing the ship to crash into the “Dromi” in a slanted manner.

The situation was devastatingly shocking to the “Dromi”, which mobilized its personnel to the “Nahel Argama” through launch boats and kept its distance. The Captain was unable to tell his crew to carry

out evasive maneuvers, and the white ship that was closing in on them covered the windows of the bridge, causing a huge jolt that shook the hull of the “Dromi”. The “Nahel Argama” starboard hit the upper deck of the “Dromi”, crushing its main cannons, before stopping.

Luckily for both sides, as both sides were following the relative velocity of the ‘L1 Junction’, the relative velocity between both ships could be considered to be still. In the end, there was merely a scene of ships scraping each other, and not crushing each other, but the impacts the people inside felt were not to be taken for laughs. The “Dromi” was hit by an assault cruiser that was twice its weight, and was practically sent flying.

The 3 main cannons were crushed in a single blow, igniting a chain of explosions and circuit sparks; the ship took the vicious force, and was tilted greatly as it floated to the ‘L1 Junction’ direction. The keel supporting the ship had tremendous cracks on it, and the “Dromi” was in a floating state. Above it, the “Nahel Argama” momentum was negated, and may be looking still, but the “Dromi” was not the only ship in chaos.

All the unfastened items were sent flying, and the impact spread from the bow to the tail, causing all the facilities to rattle. The cylinder of the gravity block stopped working for a moment, and the objects that were originally held down by the centrifuge force were dancing about wildly in the all. The partitions of the zero gravity block let out horrifying sounds, while the light panels that were not shattered shook through the ship. Gilligan was awakened by the impact sirens, and was then swallowed by the impact that came from behind as he bounced through the passages without understanding what was going on. Angelo, who was headed to the infirmary, hit his back against the ceiling, while Flaste and company in the bridge fell off their chairs. It was the same for the mobile suit deck, as screams and growls were mixed together while the group of more than 400 people were thrown into the air.

The mobile suits were not sent flying as the hooks under their feet were latched onto the trenches on the deck, but it was different for the humans who only had magnetic soles under the feet. The prisoners that were ordered to sit down on the deck were thrown into the air without exception, and the invigilating Republic soldiers were floating about in the wide deck, their limbs swimming about for something to support on. Even if there was an order not to move, nobody could stop moving in this situation. The relationship between the watchers and the prisoners had collapsed at this point, and while everyone could only try to ensure that they were safe, the ECOAS members were the first

ones to get into action.

Hasan got back from the infirmary, and the plier he handed them reached all the members' hands; at this point, they were removing the restrains of the last man. The moment everyone else was thrown into the air, Conroy saw several figures swimming in the air, and stepped on the back of someone nearby as he swam through the air. He kicked the shoulder and backs of many crew members floating around, used the recoil to move his body, and charged right at Alec, who was holding a submachine gun. While the Republic soldiers were still lost, the Garencieres team was still sane enough to watch their surroundings, but they were no match for Conroy, who was skilled at moving under zero gravity.

He got behind Alec and used his burly arms to lock the latter by the neck. The blood in the carotid pulse was obstructed, and Alec soon fell limp. Conroy drew the wire gun from his waist and shot at the Republic soldiers that sensed this situation.

Conroy shot the wire gun towards a soldier that was about to raise his automatic handgun, and robbed the latter of the mobility of his hands. He then stacked the body of the unconscious Alec onto him and used the mass of two men to pull the body of that soldier over. The soldier that was guided glided through space, and the moment he was about to approach, Conroy slammed a quick elbow into the back of the soldier's head. There were around 90 people watching in comparison to the 29 ECOAS members. Garity and the other men were below Conroy as their platoon had only one man watching over them, and they too kicked the walls and the other crew as they attacked their prey.

"Those who have weapons are to cover the Captain's men and head to the bridge! The engine operator is to head over to the engine room!"

With a gruff roar, the submachine guns were thrown into the air. Otto's momentum allowed him to get down onto the floor, "Follow me!" and he immediately flew towards the airlock. Several men attacked the invigilators, and followed Liam and the rest who had managed to get the weapons. The tremor of the ship caused by the bow thruster nozzles allowed the ECOAS to counter. This was the plan Hasan told them to get the ship back, and what was left would be the decisive moment. The gunshots that were sprayed randomly caused Otto's heart to freeze as he passed through the airlock and left the mobile suit deck. The moment he was about to grab the lift grip on the wall, "Hold it!" a voice called out, causing him to freeze.

The Republic soldier standing on the passage raised his automatic

rifle. Otto hesitated for a moment when he saw the soldier's young face. *Can I not kill him?* His body felt that the opponent was still human, and he was screaming without reason. At that fatal moment when he did not squeeze the trigger, the flash of a gunshot rang through with a loud sound.

Otto instinctively closed his eyes, opened them immediately, and saw the Republic soldier with a bullet hole shot right in the middle of the forehead, bleeding. Liam lowered the rifle poking over Otto's shoulder, "Hurry!" yelled, and moved first as she stepped on the floor. Otto saw the corpse of the Republic soldier that spun and slammed into the wall, looked over at the smoke from Liam's gun nozzle, and grabbed the lift grip with a guilty look on his face.

"I'll handle the back! Hurry!" Garity yelled as he chased them away, and Otto let the lift grip move at the fastest speed possible. He was a Captain that was responsible for the lives of all his subordinates, but he actually lacked such resolve. As he looked at the back of Liam, who went off first, "Sorry." He said simply. Liam's face turned slightly, "This is fine." She answered while ostensibly angry.

"Just be who you are."

Liam seemed to have said something important, but she turned her stare forward after their short exchange of looks, not allowing Otto to ask back. Otto felt the submachine gun he was holding in his hand, and turned his eyes to the path he was headed to. The gunshots continued to ring, and the most important thing to prevent any more sacrifices was to get back the ship. However, he did not know what the meaning of the term sacrifice was, and this thought was the only thing driving his unconsolidated mind.

Part 17[edit]

Soon after the ship stopped shaking, the sound of gunshots could be heard from afar, and it had become a background sound that shook his eardrums, just like the air-conditioning. Banagher was in the detention room, without any communication panel to determine the situation outside, and stuck his face at the door window. He looked through the metal window to check the situation on the passage, heard 2, 3 short dull bursts from beyond his sights, and a familiar bald head then appeared on the other side.

Before he could back away in time, the sound of the door laced with mattress to prevent self-mutilation being unlocked rang, and it sprung open suddenly. "Good thing you're alright, Master Banagher." he looked up at the tall and burly body turned against the light, and Gael

said this as he grabbed Banagher by the arm, pulling him out of the detention room.

“I’ll open a way. Please go and activate the “Unicorn”.”

Gael pulled up the guard he knocked unconsciousness, threw the man into the detention room, and wielded the handgun with both hands again. “We’ll talk later. Hurry.” There was no time to ask Gael who was saying this, and Banagher held his breath as he ran down the corridor. After he summoned the coordinate data of the “Unicorn” in the cockpit, he was dumped into the detention room in the gravity block, ostensibly worthless. The commotion seemed to have started in the zero gravity block, and there were no other people on the way to the elevator.

“Please immobilize the enemy units in the ship. There’ll be trouble if the mobile suits start an uprising here.”

Gael finally spoke up after he operated the elevator. About what was going on, what happened— there was definitely no need to ask. He suppressed his throbbing heart, “What about the hostages?” Banagher asked. “ECOAS should be saving them now.” Gael’s reply was drowned out by the gunshots that got gradually louder, and the electronic sound indicated to them that they arrived in the zero gravity block soon after.

The door opened, and Gael swept the gun around together with his eyes, before floating out onto the passage. “Let’s go! Don’t stay too far away from me.” Banagher followed this muttering man and held onto the lift grip on the wall. The gunshots got louder the further he progressed forward, and the scattered gunpowder smile agitated his nose. He let go of the lift grip that had reached its end point, and was about to kick the wall to float to the airlock of the mobile suit deck, only to be knocked down by Gael onto the floor. Incoming bullets grazed by from above, and the sparks of impact flashed upon the wall.

Gael squeezed the trigger to counter, and immediately rolled back to retreat behind the cross junction. Some bullets flew in unknowingly, hitting the wall, and the scattered dust landed on his head. “Mr Gael!” Banagher exclaimed as he lifted his head that was looking down. The blinding gunshots caused him to narrow his eyes. “Please go!” Gael called out as he reached his handgun from behind the wall, releasing covering fire that would require a miracle to hit the enemy.

“You mustn’t let a man like Frontal make use of the “Box” and your father’s will!”

The desperate looks crossed, and Banagher sprang into action before

his body could think. He kicked the floor and flew to the airlock around the cross junction. The bullets grazed by his body that was shot out like an arrow, Klang! The sound of metal clashing was reflected off the airlock door. He gritted his teeth, passed through the door, and was nearly about to crash in as he used his momentum to grab the handrail of the catwalk. The mobile suit deck was suddenly spread across his eyes.

In the space filled with both Federation and Zeon mobile suits, there were gunfire on the catwalks at the opposite wall; the sounds of gunfire in this combat caused this high place to become a battleship. The crew members that were dangling in mid-air were waving their limbs, those that got to the catwalk first fired the wire guns, and the ECOAS members were shooting to provide cover for the crew that was coming in. As for the Zeonic side comprising the Republic and the Garencieres team, they were trying to get in the way of the crew being saved while trying to get onto their own mobile suits. Several people were approaching the “Hizacks” only to be beaten back, and this process continued over and over again.

The “Geara Zulu” of the Garencieres team was being approached too; there was suppressing fire around the cockpit, and one would know without thinking the outcome of letting a mobile suit run rampant in such a cramped ship. Banagher looked around the ship from behind the handrail, and looked at the “Unicorn” standing at the bowside partition wall. There was a distance of more than 30m, and he did not have the belief that he could safely pass through with the gunfire blazing. *So I can only get on through the catwalk?* The moment he thought of this, deafening gunshots rang from below. Banagher immediately got down, and Conroy covered him, sweeping through with a submachine gun as he charged over.

“I’ll cover you! Go on, Banagher!”

Conroy did not wait for the reply as he poked his body out from the handrail, and the reloaded submachine gun let out a roar. The bullets gliding through the air reached the catwalk opposite, stopping the gunshots fired over to them. *It’s not a question of whether I can do it or not; I have to do it.* He took a deep breath, held it in his lungs, and charged out from the catwalk.

The hard feeling whizzed by above his head. He was to destroy all the mobile suit cockpits before they activate, and go out to fight against the enemy forces that were invading. He chased out all other thoughts in his mind, and extended his body over to the “Unicorn”. The white machine got gradually darker, and the opened cockpit hatch filled his

eyes. As he was about to reach his hands for the hatch, his body endured the inertia and stuck itself onto the armor; at this moment, a powerful generator rang, and the heat waves that came were striking down on Banagher's back.

(That's enough already, Banagher.)

The heat waves burning the skin were mixed with a cold voice. Banagher climbed onto the cockpit hatch and looked behind. He could see, beyond the beam saber blade that was shaking the air, the monoeye of the "Sinanju" looking back at him.

(It's best for you not to be reckless. Since we now know where the "Box" is, there is the option for us to burn you together with the "Unicorn".)

The beam saber created from the sleeve cover matched the red giant's body as it trembled slightly. This alone would could the heat waves to tremble, and the radiated air struck the deck in the form of wind. *When did he…Banagher did not have the time to think about this. The beam particles could melt Gundarium alloy, and was like a furnace packed in the shape of a sword. The burning hot energy was striking down 4, 5m away, and Banagher glared back at the "Sinanju" monoeye. He took in the heat waves that burned his lungs, clenched his fists, and turned his back on the cover of the cockpit hatch the beam saber was pointed at.*

I may be vaporized the next moment until even my bones are gone, but it's fine. This is the only man I don't want to succumb to. He was driven by this unknown source of stubbornness, and wanted to move to the cockpit. (What do you want to do?) Frontal's voice rang from behind, and the heat from the beam saber closed in as it blew Banagher's hair.

(Once you deny us, how do you plan to use the "Laplace Box"? Are you going to believe in the kindness of humanity and hand it over to the Federation?)

It was a question that was left till now; Banagher's heart was pumping wildly, and his body was unable to move. He turned his stiff neck and looked behind again. The distortion of the air was caused by the heat of the beam source, and the red giant's monoeye looked like it was swaying.

(A human's heart is fragile. The crew on this ship will forget about the "Box" once they return back to their duties. If the Federation gets the "Box", the distorted world till now will only continue. Isn't this against the wishes of your father, who wanted to change the world?)

The pointed beam saber remained unmoved, and behind the “Sinanju”, the massive purple mobile suit, Angelo’s “Rozen Zulu” was shaking. Perhaps Conroy and company’s resistance was weakened due to the initiative the “Sinanju” took right at the beginning. Banagher saw the monoeyes of the mobile suits, including the Garencieres “Geara Zulu” which stepped off its hangar, and moved his immobile body onto the “Unicorn” armor.

(We’re the only ones who can use the “Box” and fulfill the wishes of the Spacenoids that were practically abandoned. It’s because your father knew this that he wanted to hand the “Box” over to us. What can you do? How do you want to use the power of the “Box”?)

The “Sinanju” monoeye wavered in the distorted hot eye, twisting about in a mocking manner. Banagher saw the gunfire behind it, and he could visualize the familiar figures that were battling.

Conroy was overwhelmed by the activated “Geara Zulu”, but had not given up on saving the crew members who were still in space. Gael was running past the passages with gunshots firing. Otto, Liam and the rest were having a gunfight near the bridge. Takuya and Micott, and of course, ‘she’—these people recognized that they were fighting on their own battlefields, racing through them, but what were they fighting against? Banagher wondered. It was certainly not for the Federation, as this ship was already beyond the command of the Federation army.

Get the ship back, get the initiative, this is the only thing we can do to survive—but that’s not all. Humans will change, and they can. They can blend in and evolve according to the changes, making progress bit by bit. The people on this ship all made contact with this possibility, standing on the edge of the world, using whatever they can do to face the changing possibilities. They feel angry at the possibility that was denied, something that brought about despair. Everyone’s fighting the common enemy, driven by their human instinct to reject anything illogical.

This was the key; these were the words that existed in his heart from the moment he decided that he was going to believe her no matter what. Banagher again embraced these words and looked up at the “Sinanju” monoeye. Maybe he would be betrayed, maybe it was just his misunderstanding, but the god called possibilities in the human heart was born out of trust and continuous trust. The moment humans were imprisoned by despair and admit that they were abandoned, they could only face the world with pains all over them. *Father knew this, and that’s why he wanted to open the seal of the “Laplace Box”, to send a ripple down the deadlock called stability, before the fad of*

revolution cools, before the Universal Century sinks into complete forsakenness. He believes that there's still room to improve this world.

This gentleness and power of humanity he wants to show the world—it may be just those, but if nobody believes, nothing will happen. He believed 'her', he believed in the possibility that this ship may get it, and he believed in handing the "Box" to a real Newtype. That man's kindness believes that this grand and stupid plan can be—

"…For the sake, of everyone."

Banagher unwittingly said it out, and looked straight at the masked face through the "Sinanju".

"I'll use the "Box" for everyone, not between Federation and Zeon, and not between space and Earth. I'll use the "Laplace Box" for everyone—

The beam saber closed in, pressing a wall of heat on Banagher, vaporizing the following words. (What do you mean by 'everyone'?) This question passed through Banagher's heart, and he sensed that this question was scorching his skin more than the heat.

(A single human will never become a spokesperson for all the wills, unless you become a vessel.)

The masked expression looking through the monoeye was pressing on the body leaning on the "Unicorn" armor. Banagher tried his best not to look away.

(This isn't something that can be done easily. If you want to be a vessel, you need to empty yourself. Only when you're devoured by the abyss of space, passed through the stage of madness, and entered the next realm, can you reach this state.)

The voice seeping out from the red armor was dripping through the pores. Banagher sensed that the 'vessel' Frontal was talking about was a reference to 'God', and gulped.

(You do have talent, but you are too young. If you really want to become a vessel, follow me.)

The "Sinanju" lowered its beam saber, and its advising look was flickering on the monoeye. The heat waves scattered away, and Banagher felt a chilly wind surround his body.

(The beliefs and possibilities you trust in now will be betrayed one day. A Newtype leeched by despair will only self-destruct or shut himself in. I've seen so many examples of this. You cans still make it now, however, so follow me. You should be able to understand that you

can't return to the 'everyone' you speak of.)

Banagher suddenly felt a sharp pain deep in his chest. It was the pain riddled deep within his heart, the pain of the heartfelt words hitting home. Banagher felt the icy wind rob him of his warmth, and lifted his head to look at the "Sinanju". *This is a fact too—this man's describing himself; maybe I as someone else was a reflection of him.*

Only the people filled with despair in their flesh and blood can understand the logic of humanity, and get the power to change the world. This euphoria is just for a moment, and defenseless belief will only bring about self-destruction or self-shutdown…will I be coerced to death by despair, or will I seal myself deep inside my heart while being unable to do anything? Banagher's body trembled as he was unable to find anything to deny these words. He merely looked up at the eye of the red giant, felt an illusion of being sucked in by the light, only for a 3rd voice to ring through his mind.

—Keep saying 'even so', Banagher.

A 'voice' formed a fresh gust of wind as it blew through his mind. It passed through the floor and burned the mobile suit deck floor in the form of physical heat. The scorching metal color spread around the feet of the Sinanju, and the red hot light flew out from the inside in an instant; currents of hot winds and explosions stood at a corner of the deck.

(Funnels…!?)

Frontal ostensibly cried out as he sat in the "Sinanju", which took an impact. A fire pillar shooting out like a volcano reached the ceiling, and Banagher saw a round small object popping through the scorching torrents, using its thrust to glide through the air. The object that was no more than 3m in size dodged the horizontal sweep from the "Sinanju", shot out vernier flares to restrain movements, and glided into the clutches of the red giant. The cannon at the tip of a funnel aimed at the "Sinanju" cockpit, stopping the red machine from swinging its beam saber.

Similarly shaped objects passed through the smoking hole on the floor —and funnels started coming out one after another. The automatic funnel array was controlled by psycommu from afar, passed by the crew members that were still in detention, passed through the space on the deck, and instantly surrounded the two "Geara Zulus", sealing their movements. The "Rozen Zulu" was behind them, and moved its monoeye from side to side frantically. Banagher did not wait for the funnels to dodge the claws that were swinging in a fly-swatting manner

and aim at the cockpit as he kicked the armor of the “Unicorn” and went right at the cockpit.

He passed through the hatch, sat on the linear seat, and felt the generator rumbling from below the deck. *It’s coming,* he predicted as he looked at the partition wall through the hatch. The floor at the front wall was opened, and the elevator leading to the factory below rose up. As the “Rozen Zulu” retreated, the giant appeared as it was ferried up by the elevator, its overwhelming mass shaking the atmosphere on the mobile suit deck.

The 4 large pod binders equipped on the shoulders covered the giant in the middle without any openings, and the thick legs that were knelt down got up slowly. The binders opened like petals, and the thick machine with stout limbs at the ends and the Neo Zeon crest engraved on the chest was revealed. The head hiding the Mohawk head was lit under the lights, and Banagher called out to the owner of the ‘voice’ with all his strength.

“Miss Marida…!”

The monoeye flickered, ostensibly responding, and the large frame of the “Kshatriya” took a step forward once the elevator stopped rising.

This 4-winged giant was kept in the ship’s factory ever since it was taken back from “Palau”. Though there were many scars of battle on it, but its movements were not as slow as a wounded. The fact that it made the mobile suit deck look narrow just by appearing did not change. Leaving aside the “Geara Zulu” that was the size of an ordinary mobile suit, even the “Rozen Zulu” that was of similar mass to the “Kshatriya” staggered as if overwhelmed, and moved aside for the latter machine.

The funnels floating in the air moved about agilely, aiming at the mobile suits that were thinking of firing. The “Kshatriya” blew apart the thick smoke swaying about as it moved to the center of the deck, and suddenly stopped there. With all eyes staring at it, the deep green machine let out ‘her’ voice, causing Banagher to feel his gulped air stuck in his throat.

(Notifying all soldiers of Neo Zeon and the Republic of Zeon, this is Mineva Lao Zabi.)

Part 18[edit]

(Drop your arms immediately and retreat from this ship. The developments Full Frontal described of do not have a kind future, and it's too distant from the ideals of Zeon. As a member inheriting the Zabi bloodline, I do not allow for any vengeance upon revenge. We're living in a blank as a result of the One Year War and the past Neo Zeon Wars.)

Gilligan passed through the mobile suit deck, and walked onto the catwalk; even if he did not want to see it, the large frame of the mobile suit was in his eyes. He stood blankly and did not let his feet stick onto the floor, causing him to float around aimlessly.

The large mobile suit with 4 wings had scars all over it, and the sleeve on the right arm was burnt off, but the pressure it gave off was not to be underestimated. More than 10 funnels were deployed in the air, and it seemed that it had completely dominated the atmosphere on the deck. "Mineva Zabi…why?" Gilligan muttered as he stared at the four-winged. The head seemed to be at his vision, and had Mineva inside. *The princess of the Zabi family, who was basked in the cheers*

of Sieg Zeon as she adamantly appeared, did she deny our actions by riding on a Neo Zeon unit—

The Special Forces standing aside let down the automatic rifles in their hands and backtracked. Several other soldiers lowered their weapons, showing faltering expressions as they were rooted in fear. “Oi, you guys! What in the world are you doing!?” Upon seeing them like this, Gilligan grabbed a Leading Seaman by the collar, “Her Highness Mineva…” who merely replied as he did not look back. “SO WHAT!?” Gilligan roared as he forcefully shook the Leading Seaman.

“That Mineva’s a fake, or maybe she’s saying such things while being threatened by the Federation! Can we hold back now that we’re at this stage!? WE, THE “WIND’S ASSEMBLY” IS HERE TO SAVE OUR COUNTRY…!”

He roared with his trembling voice as he said this to himself. *At this point, there’s no way we can return back to the Republic army. I haven’t had any heroic exploits I can be proud of in the military meetings. Am I going to testify that we thought we occupied a Federation ship, but I got knocked unconscious in a sneak attack, the situation changed during that moment, and I snuck back quietly?*

It doesn’t matter what Frontal hopes for. The important thing is to save our country; in the face of the Federation that wants to uproot our name of Zeon from this war, the people should unite and protest, and we’re the vanguards. Gilligan repeated in his mind again as he glared at the 4 winged mobile suit. Its monoeye seemed to detect this stare as it looked back (To the soldiers of the Republic Army, I can understand your anger.) Mineva’s voice rang.

(I understand very well the difficulty of being the vanguard of a dishonest country, the hatred of being belittled, and the hardy lifestyle of being on the run. But this is the result of the past Zeon actions. Even if you try to justify the past, you’ll never get any self-pride back. If you can’t forgive the pretense of a country that calls itself peaceful, try and think of how to turn this lie into truth. The Principality of Zeon endured the hardships of war, and yet it can do it. Even though it lost its name of its country, its real inheritance is to go for a peaceful ideal. And you people are escaping from the difficult battle of protecting this inheritance. As warriors of Zeon, you should be ashamed of yourself.”

“Her Highness…that’s her Highness Mineva…!”

The Leading Seaman groaned in a fever-like trance, pushed Gilligan’s hand away and ran off. “Oi…!” The soldier did not respond to Gilligan’s call, who saw him run through the airlock without looking back; he did

not have the strength to catch up, and stood rooted. *Turn the lies of a peaceful country into truth? Escaping from a difficult battle? What's she saying? Ignore he mockery of those who insist that we're a fallen country, and yet not abandon it? What exactly is wrong here?* Just when he was unable to think, the light in front of his eyes suddenly darkened. (Squad leader Gilligan, it's time to retreat for now.) The voice that came through the speakers rang, causing him to lift his head dully.

(Our forces are reduced to a third here, and the remaining ones are running back to the launch boats on their own. It's about time for us to leave.)

Sub-Lieutenant Keiman's "Hizack" reached its left arm out. Gilligan looked at the funnel sticking behind it, turned his stare at the four-winged that was watching all the movements in the deck, and lowered his head upon realizing that he had no chance of winning, "But just like this…" he choked head while unable to gather enough strength to clench his fists. (Let's return to the mothership and regroup.) Keiman's voice continued.

(The "Gultoppr" and the "Dromi" are still around. If we can launch a hit on the outside of the "Nahel Argama" before it recovers. Then we'll meet up with the approaching "Sleeves" fleet again.)

These words felt like a spider web thread dangling in the darkness. "Ye…yeah. that's right." Gilligan instinctively answered and leapt into Keiman's manipulator, ostensibly relying on it. *Doesn't this guy feel anything after hearing Mineva's words?* This instinct passed through his mind, but his thought not to regret upon what he decided was stronger, and Keiman brought him to his "Hizack Custom". The funnel next to Keiman's unit did not seem to be interested in those that were leaving, and the sieve-shaped mobile suit floated in the air.

(The people of the Garencieres team are to keep their guns again. We'll work together with the people from the Federation again; I don't think you wanted to do so right at the beginning, if you had nary tried to believe in a single possibility, there is no way you would have rode on this ship.)

Part 19[edit]

"I'm the same in that I can't believe in this possibility completely. Even if I had known that it would have ended up like these, there are no words I can say to stop you. However, someone still believes, he still wants to believe in us. I hope everyone knows and respond to his sincerity; this is the final 'light' that was granted to me."

Light. This term poked at Marida's tense skin, causing her mind that was not completely focused on the psycommu to look outside.

It was the "Kshatriya" cockpit she was used to, and Mineva Zabi was saying these words on the assistance seat. There was no stranger combination than this, but Mineva's words soothed her inner heart that was aching, ostensibly because of the bad sleeping posture. She felt a warm breath of life inject into her slightly aching body and spread throughout. *The Princess seems a little different from before,* Marida thought as she thought about what she was doing in a corner of her consciousness.

She felt she had a very long dream before she was guided by Mineva and returned to the cockpit of the "Kshatriya". She had a nightmare where she was driven by rage that continued to drive her and clashed blades with Banagher's "Unicorn Gundam" many times—but the ending was very warm. A pair of hands reached out from the 'light' and pulled her out from the darkness. *Was that a dream, or was it my real memory? Or is this a continuation of my dream…?*

"I suppose the grudges and distrust of the Federation won't be erased that easily, but what we should really hate are some people who intend to use this hatred. They hail the revival of Zeon, the release of Spacenoids, but they never believed in anything, and they do not have love. They're some existences that mocks the possibilities in humanity, denies its evolution and reconcillation."

A monoeye lit up, indicating the activation of a Hizack-type mobile suit, and it passed through the shutter leading to the aft with an allied machine, not showing any killing intent at all. Marida sensed that they were planning to leave the mobile suit deck, and called back the funnels that were aimed there to deploy them around her unit. She continued to control the funnels and aim at the cockpits of the mobile suits she could see in front, the "Sinanju" and the purple mobile suit giving off sharp killing intent through its armor,. As long as she controls the output of the shots, the ship would not take too much damage. Even if Evan and Kwani's "Geara Zulu" want to resist, she could deal with the "Sinanju" and the purple mobile suits before then.

The tensions and doubts before than became a ripple that caused her senses to run amok the battlefield. It was not a dream, this was reality, and the moment her mind affirmed this again while it was starting to become clear, Marida continued to listen to Mineva's words. The tone the Princess used was different from what she used in the past. Even if their wills were as firm, she knew that Mineva's voice was never this gentle…

“Those who despair about the current reality have no rights to talk about the future. The future is merely the result of today, and if we continue to stop in the darkness, the future we hope for will never come. If we don’t walk to the ‘light’, we’ll—”

(Marida Cruz)

A familiar voice rang inside the cockpit, and Marida sensed Mineva shudder as the latter held onto the portable wireless communicator. The switches in Marida’s mind were switched, and she felt her thoughts that were around 1 second earlier scatter as her widened eyes stood still like a puppet.

(Open the cockpit and undo the funnel controls)

This voice was not of the owner of the hands that pulled her out from her nightmare—even if it was a voice from the same body, even if it was the voice of her master. Once she realized it was her master’s orders, Marida’s body moved instinctively, and she moved her hands from the ball shaped controls. “Marida, you mustn’t!” Mineva stood up from the assistance seat and exclaimed; there seemed to be a scorching heat from the arm under the pilot suit that was grabbed, causing her a pain inside her heart that was different from the physical pain. However, Marida’s body and mind was merely ignoring such things as she got into standby mode; she pulled Mineva’s arm aside and pulled the lever of the cockpit hatch.

The monitor panel in front slid open, and the external air blew in and upon their faces. “Zinnerman, you’re still…!” While Mineva continued to hold onto the wireless communicator, Marida waited for the next instruction. She knew very well that her master was on this mobile suit deck, and though she remained silent, she wanted to express her heart that seemed to be crushed. *If he’s in pain, why…* this was not something she could ask. She had no rights to step into her master’s inner heart; she was to hope for what her master hopes for, and she was to take part in battles where she was to fight her master’s enemies. If this was giving her all, she could only share his pain—

“Marida, pull yourself through. This isn’t Zinnerman’s true thought.”

Mineva got up from the assistance seat, got in front of Marida, and said so. The light shining in through the cockpit hatch was blocked, and Marida moved her eyes slightly.

“You should understand, right? Zinnerman’s hurting now. It’s your turn to help him; you’re the only one who can save him.”

Mineva placed her hand on Marida’s shoulder and poked her body

over the console. The shining light from behind created a lining beside her, and the image of Zinnerman, her master appearing in that light as he stood away from the light shining into the dark underground room, overlapped with Mineva's at this point. "Light…" Marida inadvertently muttered. *The 'light' that saved me, the arm that pulled me from my nightmare—daddy's arms.* Mineva's expression was becoming brighter, "Right, you have to be Zinnerman's 'light'—the moment her lips moved, the light shining into the cockpit suddenly got darker, and a tremendous impact hit the "Kshatriya".

The metal let out a deafening sound, and Mineva's body was thrown out of it. Marida wanted to reached for Mineva, but was unable to grab her; she held the ball controls again to adjust the machine that had crashed into the partition, and looked at the source of the pressure.

The machine that was as large as the "Kshatriya" stood there and the purple mobile suit moved its monoeye and glared over. It charged over because it knew the funnels were removed. Marida saw the arms equipped with the sharp claws shaking; the arms charged for Mineva, who was thrown out of the machine, and Marida immediately gave the funnels on standby the command to shoot. The funnels flew with the wind moved together and surrounded the purple machine. It was not difficult for her to shoot through the cockpit before the claw pincer Mineva, but…

(Hold it.)

A voice that suddenly came in through the communicator stopped the movements of the funnels. (Stop it. This is an order.) The voice that was released probably did not understand what it was trying to stop. Marida could only obey the order, and she sensed the source of the common pain reach its breaking point as she started to look for her master in her reality vision.

Her master—Zinnerman, was harboring a heart that was about to be crushed, sitting back and waiting for Mineva to be mistreated. *It's my turn to help you, it's my turn to be your 'light'.* Marida repeated these words in her heart as she tried to exert strength into her hands holding onto the ball controls. Her resisting body started to cackle, her fingers were practically unable to move as they trembled like a leper, and a scream that was without voice filled the cockpit of the "Kshatriya".

Part 20[edit]

The three claws grabbed Mineva, who was tossed into the air, and acted like claws of a wild beast that caught its prey. Banagher inadvertently let his body move forward, but was blocked by a beam

saber that was shining from the side, causing him to exert strength in his fist holding the control stick until it turned white.

The “Sinanju” held the beam saber to seal the “Unicorn” moves as it silently waited for the movements of its subordinate. Banagher saw the funnels point in another direction as they floated in the air. “Miss Marida, make him stop!” He exclaimed at the “Kshatriya”, but there was no response. The “Rozen Zulu” that got Mineva looked over in place of the 4-winged unit that was kneeling on the deck and cringing. Mineva, who was clasped by the claws, was like a worm that could be crushed with a single finger. The sharp claws were poking at her abdomen and back, pressing down on the body that was not wearing even a normal suit.

(You said it’s for everyone’s sake? Banagher Links?)

The hideous voice came from the purple mobile suit. *Lieutenant Angelo,* Banagher wanted to call out, but his voice was frozen still, and his hand on the control stick froze.

(What kind of joke are you making? You don’t even know the pain of having something being taken from you. Does your everything here include me!?)

The large body of the “Rozen Zulu” raised Mineva to the front and took a step closer. Its hooks under the heels sank into the notches, and the footsteps of metal shook the air, causing Mineva’s body to jerk backwards as she was exposed to this tremor. A little scream rang from the wireless communicator she held onto, and Banagher felt his hairs stand. Even if it looked to be a mere tremor, it was a painful interrogation to Mineva, who was held down by the claws. They cut into the body, ripping her cape and clothes, and may had crushed her rips. (Stop it, Lieutenant Angelo!) (This is too much!) the two “Geara Zulus” too faltered as they took a step forward, and Kwani and Evan’s voices rang. (SHUT UP!) Angelo roared, and the monoeye glaring at the “Unicorn” remained unmoved. The “Rozen Zulu” again took a step forward, and Mineva’s groan of agony agitated Banagher’s ears.

(ANSWER ME, BANAGHER LINKS! DO YOU DARE TO SAY SUCH WORDS IN THIS SITUATION!? CAN YOU SAY SUCH WORDS IN THIS SITUATION WHEN THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO YOU IS BEING CRUSHED!?)

Mineva’s pain reached Banagher, who sensed the pain beyond the physical pain of her body being ripped, and turned a pleading look at the “Sinanju”. He hoped the calm voice could stop Angelo and end this misery, but the “Sinanju” merely pointed its beam saber at him as it

remained silent. *It all depends on you. Make your answer, Banagher.* The voice under the mask reached him in the silence as its owner did not soil its hands, spiking into the boy's mind, which then fell into panic, creating a certain icy thing in it.

It was chilly enough to freeze his body and mind, but was also a fireball that could burn him and everything around them—*is this hatred? Is that the embodiment of the feeling that made Mahdi Garvey mad and kept clinging onto Zinnerman? His heart was pulsating away,* grrr… *the "Unicorn" growled. The psycoframe gave off a light, and he felt an attacking color enter the cockpit as he gave up on thinking.*

It's pointless now. It's useless to talk with these people. If this malice and hostility can rip through enemies, then even if my body's burned up—

(Stop…it…Banagher.)

The voice that came from the abyss of pain shot through the core of his chest like an arrow. Banagher's foot that was stepping onto the pedal unconsciously was trembling, and he recovered before looking up.

(This, is created, by us…you aren't the one, who has to fight.)

The body that was rid of its freedom brought itself up slightly, and she used both hands to press against the claws pressing down on her cleavage. The light of the psycoframe got weaker; Banagher felt the roar of the "Unicorn" fade away, and he stared at the cape that was fluttering with the wind, showing that will of hers. (Zinnerman…) Mineva let out a painful breath and continued her interrupted voice.

(This is, the result of what, we caused…the Red Comet here, isn't Char; just a hallucination born from, our grudges.)

The beam saber right in front of Banagher was shaking slightly, indicating that the "Sinanju" was faltering. (PRINCESS MINEVA! IF YOU THINK I'M JUST MAKING A THRE—!) Mineva's voice interrupted Angelo's roar, (Wake up…!) and a forced voice rang through the communicator.

(Marida's here, and yet, you can't shake off your ghosts? Take, responsibility, Zinnerman…!)

An anguished voice spread through the deck, bringing pressure to the enclosed space. Banagher was ostensibly crushed by this pressure, and spotted someone swaying as he stood up at a corner of the

catwalk.

The profile had his stare lifted as he looked at the giants that were in a standstill. He looked as small as a bean, but this body in the shape of Zinnerman was obviously showing doubt on the all-view monitor, and Banagher looked at him without adding on with anything.

Part 21[edit]

The “Rozen Zulu” grabbing onto Mineva remained unmoved as its monoeye looked around with a timid expression. Perhaps it was trying to look for him, but Angelo’s hotheaded state would make it impossible to find him. In contrast, Mineva was very calm, probably because she knew where he was. Even if he did not appear in her eyes, Mineva could have consciously discovered the despicable man who was hiding in this corner of the catwalk, observing the proceedings and giving a chiding look.

*The hallucination formed by grudges.*Zinnerman recalled the words that were left at his ears, and looked at the “Sinanju” through the handrail of the catwalk. It was just as what Mineva had said; no matter the true aim of Full Frontal, there was no soul of Char Aznable there. It was just as the man himself had said, he was the vessel of the Spacenoids’ will—a vessel that was meant to be injected with hatred. This was something he knew right from the beginning but even though he knew, he continued to help Frontal and joined the “Sleeves”. It was something he had to do; no matter whether Frontal was Char or a monster, nothing mattered as long as the military ranks could be reorganized again.

He was not dreaming for the revival of Zeon, and he was not fighting to earn the food for his subordinates. He just wanted to use something else to ease the pain, the pain of living on, the pain of having his grudges haunting him, the pain of being used as a living dump as he dealt with things more important than his life, the pain of struggling on. He could only continue on in order to forget the pain of his world being destroyed that could not be erased. As he continued to walk on, he finally made it here.

What’s wrong about this? What else can I do? Zinnerman reached into his clutches, and took out a photo from a pocket he had never rummaged into. It was a photo of him before he embarked on his battles, when his skin still had shine, Fee who was standing beside him and smiling, Maree who was just past 5 years old. He looked at the photo he kept for countless years, and used his fingers to touch the face of his smiling daughter.

Maree's little hands; whenever he returned home, she would run over to him with a beaming face, and whenever he was to rejoin the force, she would cry and stick to Fee. *Now you're asking me to work together with the guys who crushed that one and only warmth that inherited my bloodline? The one precious treasure I had in the world? Stop joking around. If the past can't be changed, the present won't change either. The possibility of reconciliation, Newtypes, these are all nonsense. I didn't hear their screams; I was eating my meals, using the toilet, living the life in a prisoner camp, and I wasn't around when they needed me most, I couldn't do anything. This is unforgivable, unreasonable. Even if I want to die together with my ghost, only this grudge and regret—*

(…Daddy.)

A mumbling voice rang through the communicator and reached Zinnerman's ears, causing his finger that were stroking Maree's face to turn numb.

(Can you forgive me of my stubbornness…?)

The voice was steady, but there was a heat sensation that showed she was not willing to back down at all, causing his sights to turn dark in an instant. His inner heart was then twisted by something, causing the suppressed things to collapse. The voice rang in his heart, he lost his footing, and his body floated in zero gravity.

What are you saying? Why are you saying this in such a voice? I just said all those on the "Garuda" in a panic. That's just some impulsive rambling from a man who did not want to experience the feeling of loss again, and decided not to have anything— the words in his heart did not become a voice as a hot liquid flowed out from his eyes. Zinnerman did not know what to do as he looked at the daughter on his photo.

What's there to be forgiven? I'm the one who needs to beg for it. I haven't done anything, and I never thought of wanting to do anything. I just turned the 16 years of lies to my daughters while I hid in the shadows. You're still willing to call such a man, such a father…

"…I allow you."

That's if I still have the right. Zinnerman held onto the photo tightly, turned his tear-filled eyes at the "Kshatriya", and brought his mouth to the communicator as he said his last words.

"Follow your heart. This is the final order I'm giving you."

(Understood, master.)

Marida answered with a light smile, and the binders of the “Kshatriya” pulled its binders up. The sub-arms from the front poked up, and a beam saber flashed as the explosive light expanded through the deck with heat waves.

The bright and intense light looked to be burning the darkness inside the body. Zinnerman was unable to react to the unexpected situation, and the dazzling ‘light’ engulfed him in it completely.

Part 22[edit]

The beam saber flashed by, catching the right arm of the “Rozen Zulu” by slicing it up from below. (What…) Angelo murmured; the hand claws grabbing Mineva flew out, and Banagher’s body instinctively probed forward.

“Audrey!”

The restrain of the claws was loosened, and Mineva—Audrey was thrown into the air. Mega particles from the funnels were fired behind her to cover, and though the output was low, the buzzing electric sounds shook the machine, creating rising flames of explosion from below the feet of the “Sinanju”. Banagher let the “Unicorn” move forward, and it passed by the red giant that lost its balance. He opened its cockpit hatch, and fixed his eyes on Audrey in the midst of the blowing hot wind.

“Banagher!”

The face looking back showed, and the caped body blown by the storm reached her hands out. “Please, “Unicorn”!” Banagher said these words, and kicked himself from the linear seat to fly out from the cockpit. He opened his arms wide and raced in the sky to catch Audrey’s body that was gradually approaching. Once he was certain that the mass was in his arms, they embraced each other, and were blown away by the heat waves before the “Unicorn” leaped and approached from behind.

He hugged Audrey by the head, trying his best to shrink himself. The white machine suddenly covered them, and an incoming pressure felt like it was going to crush them, causing him to feel goosebumps. The next moment, their bodies were sucked into the rectangular cockpit hatch, and they dropped into the linear seat while ostensibly falling in. Banagher endured the inertia and mass as he caught Audrey in the chest, closed the hatch, and held onto the control again.

The heat wave was interrupted, and the sweet aroma he had a whiff of several hours again chased aside the smell of ozone from the beam

saber. After checking the smell and chest of Audrey Burne, Banagher resisted the urge to bury himself in the hair in front of him, “Are you hurt?” he focused his consciousness on the surroundings. He saw the “Rozen Zulu” swing its remaining arm as it was tossed around by the intersecting funnels, and Audrey shook her head at this moment, her stare showing an intense light at close right.

“Banagher, to think that you really believe in me…”

“Of course.”

Banagher looked back at the somewhat moist eyes, and answered with a seemingly angry voice. “Behind you…!” Audrey exclaimed, and Banagher’s spine instinctively piloted the machine and turned it around.

The beam saber flashed on its own as it shot out from the sleeve, blocking the beam saber the “Sinanju” swung down. The beams clashed with each other, and the flashes and noise shook the cockpit. (Our plan was unexpectedly thrown into complete disarray.) Frontal’s voice entered Banagher’s ears, and this voice full of amusement caused him to sense Audrey’s tense body.

(This place is too cramped. We’ll have a duel in front of the “Laplace Box”.)

“What…!?”

(It’ll be a race from now on, Banagher.)

The clashing beam suddenly disappeared, and the “Unicorn” lost its balance as it missed its slash. The “Sinanju” used that moment to slam the unit, knocking the “Unicorn” aside, and lit the thrusters on its back to fly towards the aft. With the thrust pressure, it pushed aside Evan and Kwani’s “Geara Zulus” before passing through the shutter of the partition wall.

“Are you playing around!?”

If Banagher were to use the Beam Magnum, he would create a large hole through the “Nahel Argama”. He lowered the rifle he wanted to raise, stepped on the pedal, and heard anything sound from the communicator. (Why would we be running?) The flashes of the hits appeared at his feet, and the cables buried under the floor let out sparks. The “Rozen Zulu” was left with one arm, and it shot suppressing fire from the front of that arm as it followed the “Sinanju” through the shutter, shooting the emergency airtank beside the door like it was giving a parting gift. The flames and storm shook the mobile

suit deck, and the “Kshatriya”, which wanted to chase after them, was surrounded by smoke.

(I’ll kill you next time.)

A bone-chilling malce shot through the monoeye that was flickering through the smoke. The shutters on the partition wall were quickly sealed off, and the “Sinanju” and “Rozen Zulu” disappeared together from the deck. The air from the purifier caused the flames and smoke to remain as if under gravity, and the shutters were tightly sealed as they were covered by pitch black smoke.

Frontal’s objective was clear. He intended to leave the ship deck just like this, meet up with the other escort squad machines waiting outside, make contact with the approaching fleet, and head forth to “Industrial 7”. However, Banagher could not make pursuit with Audrey on board, and he did not know of a place for her to immediately alight with all the flames and smoke abound as the “Unicorn” stood on the burning deck, not knowing what to do. Audrey, who was on his knees, grabbed the pilot suit by the chest. “Banagher, you mustn’t hand the “Box” over to Frontal like this.” She said whilst giving an urgent look back.

“The Side co-prosperity is simply an illusion. That man may really destroy the world if he gets such great power.”

“I got it. I won’t let him.”

The unmasked face still felt like a mask, the cold expression of forcing the notion of giving up to someone; those were not thoughts for the sake of humanity’s future, and there was no sign of pity to others or himself. It was a demon’s eye that was looking at this world from the outside, one without zeal. Marida, Zinnerman, Audrey; Banagher was able to think calmly because of the resonating warmth of their calls, and with their support, he put on the helmet in the cockpit. He thought in his heart that there was no time to hesitate. “Captain Otto!” he called out with a voice no softer than all the voices ringing through the communicator.

“Please turn to “Industrial 7”. The “Laplace Box” is over there!”

Part 23[edit]

(Frontal knows about it. Hurry. It’ll be bad if he gets the initiative!)

Banagher’s voice rang through the open channel, causing Liam, and even Flaste, who had the gun pointed at him, turn around with shocked looks. Otto held onto the submachine gun with one hand, “Are you

serious!?" he yelled back into the communicator. (There's no mistake.) Mineva's voice answered.

(I said it. He threatened to release the air on the deck everyone was on to coerce Banagher into talking. We don't know what this man will do if he gets the "Box". Please hurry and depart immediately.)

Otto gasped, and looked over at the sensor operator. The profile sat down at the console he just got back. "There're 4 "Sleeves" units, leaving by SFS. They're headed for the shoal space region." He reported. "Are they planning to make contact with the reinforcement fleet…?" Liam interrupted with an anxious expression. He looked at Flaste, who had given up on resisting; their eyes met, and Flaste's eyes confirmed silently that Frontal was this kind of man. "How's the takeover of the ship!?" Otto hollered as he looked over at Mihiro in front of the communication console.

"Each department has taken back the initiative. The mobile suit deck is starting with the firefighting and the evacuation of the wounded. Most of the Garencieres team has surrendered, and the Republic soldiers are retreating."

Mihiro answered without looking back as she listened in on the channels that were buzzing from all departments. Mineva's broadcast probably caused the enemy to lose their will to fight, but though they seized the bridge back without bloodshed, it was not normal to see all the cadres fully armed. There was Flaste's subordinate being pointed with a gun at the console in front of him too.

"Ignore the escapees. Our priority is to repair each department." Otto commanded, sat on the Captain's seat he did not feel he had seized back completely, and reached his hand for the microphone broadcasting to the entire ship.

"Once our preparations are complete, we'll launch immediately. Turn our path to "Industrial 7", set the shortest course—"

A sudden flash outside the window interrupted his words, and a blunt impact shook the bridge. "What's going on!?" Liam hollered as she jumped up with Flaste. The sound of the explosion interrupted her words and shook the outer wall of the bridge. Otto looked outside, "It's the Republic army!" and tensed up upon hearing the sensor operator's voice.

"The "Gultoppr" and the "Dromi" have encircled to the front. Minovsky Particles are at combat density. 8 enemy units launched."

The white "Hizack" that flew by the bow was definitely a unit from the

Republic army. The unique looking Musai Kai-class ships encircled the “Nahel Argama” with the ‘L1 Junction’ behind them. They were actually so reliant on scattering Minovsky Particles under such distance, and coupled with the exact same hit-and-run strategy from before, the overreliance of the tactics in the textbook really confounded Otto. “Those idiots, they haven’t taken in all their comardes…!” Flaste growled. “Anti-air combat! The mobile suit squadron is to launch if they can!” Liam yelled, and Otto looked at her back as he watched her forget to point her gun at Flaste. He was about to agree with her decision, but an unexpected thought caused him to increase the force of the grip on the Captain’s armrest.

He looked at the positioning of the enemies on the sensor monitor, *can this work? Is this really good?* He asked himself, and the only answer he got was that he could only do this. “LEAVE THEM!” He shouted with all his strength.

“Use a few machine guns for anti-air combat. Prepare the hyper mega particle cannon for firing.”

He turned his stare to the front and stared at the ‘L1 Junction’ in the path. “REPEAT IT!” Otto ignored the stares from everyone else, and shouted. “Ye-yes.” He heard Mihiro’s stammering, and as she started to give commands to each department, “Captain…” Liam gave him a stare.

Is this really alright? her expression was asking this. it was the same expression as when she said ‘this is fine, just be who you are’ after he hesitated on whether he should shoot the Republic soldier. He looked back at those eyes, and suppressed the piercing pain in his inner heart. “We can’t weaken our forces here.” He looked away as he said.

“And there’s the issue of time. We need to settle this in a hit.”

It’s different from having to do it. I can brace myself and kill just because I can’t see the enemy’s face. Once he realized this was a dullness the Oldtypes had, Otto looked around to see the devastated situation on the ship. He looked back at Liam with the expression of a Captain. “Yes!” Liam answered with a voice a First Officer should have, and they both looked forward.

This is part of training—he would not say such defensive things. As a foolish Oldtype, he had to at least bear responsibility for all he had done. He was extremely clear that this act was not something he could handle, but Otto continued to stare at the Republic flee that was starting to get in position. After the shock from the direct hit, the hyper mega particle cannon started to buzz as it loaded, and the light on the

bridge became a dark red color.

Part 24[edit]

"Ceasing all evasive movement, directing full power to the hyper mega particle cannon."

"Coordinates steady, aiming the bow to the target."

"All hands, switch to backup power."

The voices continued with furor, and the lights on the ceiling was dull as the mobile suit deck suddenly got dark, brightening the colors of the flames everywhere further. "Anyone that's free is to help put out the fire!" Conroy's voice echoed.

The crew with OBAs left the catwalk in ones or twos, and there were more than 50 people going everywhere to put out the fires. They just need to draw the air out if they wanted to do so, but with wounded everywhere, they could not use this method. The air purifiers brought oxygen in this zero gravity situation, and Conroy floated around with the firehose hose, while Tomura of the Garencieres team was pulling the wounded Republic soldiers to the air lock. Evan's "Geara Zulu" abandoned its beam rifle and threw aside the burning metal frames. While the “Unicorn” was carrying the wounded with both hands, Kwani’s “Geara Zulu”, which had a lost arm, was helping with the firefighting. (We’ll die if the propellants set off a chain reaction of explosions! Tell the mobile suits to remove the cartridges!) Someone’s voice rang through the communicator. (Republic men, anyone can do, report your battle strength. We have no idea of the numbers left on the deck!) A female voice passed by, probably belonging to the civilian girl called Micott.

There was nothing impressive. The men who were wielding guns and attacking each other a moment before were working together. There was no room to talk about whether reconciliation could work, and they could only move their bodies instinctively. Zinnerman sighed as he looked at this flaming field that had no discrimination of Zeon or Federation. The breath of fatigue he had vented in for more than a decade floated on the deck, was buried under the continuous explosions, and were sucked into the purifier installation together with the smoke ans team.

The Republic army's attacks continued. The sound of explosions mixed in with the buzzing on the trembling catwalk, and once he heard his heart return back to nothingness, Zinnerman turned his stare behind. He knew there was someone there right from the beginning, and the expected face exchanged looks with him. Zinnerman first drew the handgun on his waist, and threw it at the other man.

"…Can I leave it to you?"

Gael Chan received the handgun that was thrown into the air, and looked back wordlessly. There was no need to say anything more to such a man; he was a man who was driven by the emotions he could not erase, who lost options in life, and could imagine how pitiful Zinnerman felt for losing his goal. Zinnerman felt that Gael was the perfect person to make the decision, and grabbed the handrail tightly. He subconsciously looked at the deck filled with smoke, and waited for the gunshot signalling the judgment to ring. "I refuse." However, Gael merely responded in such.

The burly body threw the handgun onto the deck, and kicked the floor to approach. *Such an ungracious man. Does he think that he can pay for the ship's fees with some cheap wine?* Zinnerman cursed in his heart as he glared at the unwavering bald head. However, Gael did not mind at all as he approached, landed beside Zinnerman, and turned his stare to a corner of the deck.

The large body of the "Kshatriya" could be seen opposite the smoke that was starting to disperse. Zinnerman spotted the moss green machine that was trying to avoid being seen, gasped, and his body had nowhere to go to as the monoeye looked back at him.

The "Kshatriya" slowly shook the 4 binders there were severely damaged, and looked over at him before opening the cockpit hatch. The pilot appearing from the inside did not seem to be in good condition. The blowing hot air on the deck made her footing unstable, but the long hair tied to the back of her head swayed. Her blue eyes regained some life, and her eyes were clearly looking back at Zinnerman through the smoke, giving off a glint that was like starlights 30m away.

"Maree…"

These words unwittingly leaked out from his mouth, and landed on his chest, bringing a tinge of warmth to his body that was like an empty hollow. Zinnerman's eyes did not learn their lesson as they started to tear up, and he lowered his stare. "Princess Mineva did say it before." Gael did not look back at Zinnerman, and said,

“Take responsibility, Captain. She and Banagher still need you.”

Gael left these words, turned his back on Zinnerman, and left. *I don’t have this right.* A tremor from a direct hit immediately dispelled the notion in his heart, and it shook the ship, causing the catwalk to rattle. Zinnerman brought his body back to the floor after nearly floating up, and his shoulders trembled as he was impacted by the surge of emotions. The water droplets scattered because of the tremor, floating in front of his eyes, and decorated Marida in the belly of the “Kshatriya” like lights.

Part 25[edit]

The light ring of the direct hit expanded, and instantly engulfed half the hull of the “Nahel Argama”. Gilligan used the AMBAC to turn the machine greatly as he flew above the white ship. As he saw the anti-air fire that was unable to reach him at all, his lips showed a smile.

“As expected, the “Nahel Argama” can’t use its main cannon after all. “Gulltoppr” and “Dromi”, shoot the “Nahel Argama” down with your cannons! It’s just a puppet that can’t even dodge now!”

He called out into the wireless communicator, and raised the beam launcher of the “Hizack Custom”. The “Nahel Argama” was perfect live bait as it remained unmoved even till this point, but perhaps the engine was malfunctioning, causing the generator to subpar, probably due to the battle with the “Gundam” from before. Gilligan could tell that the anti-ship cannons of the “Gultoppr” and the “Dromi” could sink it with their cannons, and gave the signal for the allied machines to retreat. (We’re still not done with the reclamation!) however, this answer came, infuriating Gilligan.

That Captain Hohky of the “Gullltoppr” is the one who most deserves the baptism of actual combat inside the “Nahel Argama”. If two, three battles went by him, his weak brain will tense up a little. “LEAVE IT!’ Gilligan turned to face the “Gulltoppr”.

“THERE HAS TO BE A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF SACRIFICE!! THOSE OF THE “WIND’S ASSEMBLY” SHOULD KNOW. START BOMBARDING!!”

This is a war. His hotheaded mind was stating this, and he turned to look at the “Nahel Argama” that was full of burns. If the “Gundam” and the mobile suit with the funnels move out, they would have no chances of winning. The Red Comet’s squadron had already pulled away from battle. “It’s not in my intention to implicate my allies, but this can’t be helped.” He muttered, turned his stare away from the white ship that still had lots of his acquaintances inside, and glared at the “Gulltoppr” that remained unmoved.

“We must at least sink the “Nahel Argama”. If we don’t show that we did something to cover the Red Comet, the “Sleeves” won’t accept us.”

They won’t die in vain. As long as we’re still alive, as long as we don’t lose our wills as avant-gardes of the new world, we won’t die in vain. He continued to repeat the words in his mouth. *Then what if the situation’s reversed?* The voice of a devil’s advocate questioned Gilligan, “There’s no need for that.” And Gilligan’s words caused his face to numb.

(Let’s go back, Lieutenant Gilligan. The “Sleeves” fleet won’t respond to our call. The operation has failed.)

“WHERE ARE WE RETURNING TOO!? TRY RETURNING BACK TO OUR COUNTRY IF YOU DARE! YOU’LL BE DEEMED A LAUGHING STOCK, AND YOU’LL MOST LIKELY GET IMPRISONMENT FOR LIFE!”

Cowardly Gilligan. He seemed to hear the teasing of the bad

children. *Those guys—those apathetic people of the Republic won't understand that we're acting for the sake of our country. Even Mineva Zabi doesn't want to understand. To those that don't want to understand, we can only show outcome, show our force so that they could recognize us, right?* He held onto the control stick with enough strength to sever it, wanting to shake off the voices of the bad children in his mind. (Give up. If you're a soldier, just accept the outcome.) Captain Hohky's reply however caused the last strand of sanity in Gilligan to snap.

No, this outcome isn't an outcome. The Sides shall rise, the "Wind's Assembly" shall be recognized as patriotic heroes just like the heroes of the past. This is the correct outcome. Those who're upright can't feel fearful about this moment of infamy— Monaghan Baharov's words appeared in Gilligan's mind, and he stepped on the pedal. The "Hizack Custom" machine accelerated greatly, and the "Gulltoppr", with its back facing the "L1 Junction", slowly got bigger. He went by the still main cannons, went down the slope of the ship, stopped in front of the bridge, and braked to turn his relative velocity with the ship to zero. He raised the beam launcher and aimed it at the bridge.

"Captain, this is the last warning. Shoot down the "Nahel Argama", or I'll shoot the bridge."

The steering pilot witnessed this through the window, and took a few steps back in fear. In contrast, Hohky's expression changed as he ran forward. *It can't be helped. You're like those foolish citizens too. Your senses are all numb from all the slavery, and you only know how to laugh at the passion to save our country.* "Lieutenant…! Don't be foolish—" Hohky shouted, "YOU'RE THE FOOLISH ONES!!!" but Hohky roared out in fury.

"WHY HASN'T ANYONE SEEN THIS REALITY CLEARLY!? WHY IS EVERYONE ABLE TO REMAIN CALM EVEN WHEN WE LOST OUR COUNTRY!! WE USED TO RECITE THE PLEDGE TO BUILD ZEON. THE ADULTS IN THE WAR WERE ALL SO MOTIVATED! EVEN DAD, WHO DISOWNED ME ONCE I ENTERED THE ARMY, USED TOO—"

BOOM. A wind pressure-like torrent blew by the cockpit, erasing all words that were about to follow.

All sounds were eliminated in that instant, and the white flash scorched the eyes. The next moment, the color of scorched metal surrounded the cockpit in a burning vortex. Gilligan saw that the all-view monitor was covered in red, and all the electronics were burning. The heat reached his pilot suit in that moment, and the hand holding the control

stick was burning like fire.

“WAAAAAHHHHH!!!!”

It was hard to tell if it was a scream or the sound of the flesh being burnt to crisp from the exposure to high heat. But no matter what it was, that was the last sound that rang in his consciousness. Gilligan let out a scream that was unbefitting of a hero’s end, but of a child, and felt despair as his consciousness was devoured by the scorching torrent.

Part 26[edit]

The “Nahel Argama” fired its hyper mega-particle cannon. This monstrous cannon weapon, 50m long and 18m in diameter, immediately melted the “Hizack Custom” in its path, and the “Gultoppr” and “Dromi” were also engulfed in the beam.

The window on the bridge was evaporated like soap bubbles, and the bodies of Captain Hohky and the rest inside were incinerated without remains. The electric circuits of the main cannon was exploded in a chain reaction as it was severed down the middle in half, and was scattered by the storm of mega-particles. The “Dromi” was immediately vaporized, and the hull tilted greatly like a tree swaying, its armor ripped off to reveal the skeletal frame. The hyper mega particle cannon buried the two Musai Kai-class ships, and did not negate its powerful energy even after such a heat. The scorching torrent continued to race forward, and the wild vapor of light hit upon the ‘L1 junction’.

It was a massive construct that had a maximum diameter of more than 2km long, but it was merely a weak alloy of solar general panels and metal frames. This ‘L1 junction’ took a direct hit from the hyper mega particles, and reacted like a burnt plastic kite hit by gas. The beam immediately landed on the solar panels that were enough to power 5 areas, and the snowflake-like crystal plate had a large hole burst through it. The core managed to avoid a direct hit, but it was impossible for the construct to be fine after a basking of a large amount of scattered particles. The collapsed and wrinkled core let out a chain explosion of flames, puncturing the metal frame, and splitting the collapsed solar power generator into countless pieces. This L1 junction which had been in L1 space for a long time as a lighthouse lost its ornament-like purpose as it gradually went into collapse.

The frame linking the solar panels was severed in a chain manner, and numerous reflected light scattered around the snow crystals. The core area exploded, and the stabilizing cable in the middle twitched a little. This cable started to be dragged by the gravities of both Earth and the

Moon as it slid through the voice, and the husky 7.2km long cable became an arrow that signaled the end of the L1 junction as it deviated a little off course under the power of gravity.

As there were other scattered shrapnel dancing in this area, the “Hizack” squadron, which had lost their place of belonging, were flying about. They did not have time to care about their collapsed formation as they were doing their utmost just trying to dodge the shrapnel; during this time, the “Nahel Argama” ceased its beam attack and started to move.

The engines, which provided power for the hyper mega particle cannon, regained power, and 10 main thrusters lit their flares in unison. The “Nahel Argama” turned its belly to the collapsed L1 junction and went off to “Industrial 7”. As the thruster jets pressure blew the shrapnel apart, the ship that was almost 400m in length went away in an instant, and the 7 “Hizacks” were left, with nowhere to go, and the voices through the communicator rang in the void.

(The mothership’s sunk!! What do we do now!?)

(That’s why I didn’t want to do this…!!!)

(Don’t talk! We can only hang on with the oxygen in the unit before someone finds us!)

(I don’t want to suffocate to death here!! Mommy!!)

(Ca-calm down! This is the return path between the Moon and Earth. Some ship will save us immediately. The “Wind’s Assembly” preaches…)

Part 27[edit]

In an instant, there was a tremendous flash as bright as the sun, immediately drowning out the twinkles of the night.

it was in the middle of the L1 space region. At a distance of more than 10,000km, one could only imagine what kind of thing could cause that flash; but given the thickness of the Minovsky Particles half an hour ago, it would not be difficult to imagine that something eventful happened a while ago. "How is it?" Nigel asked through the contact loop as he did not look at the expanded window no further.

It had been 6 hours since he launched from the "General Revil". The Base Jabber finished its final acceleration as it moved on with the help of inertia, and the pilot had time to analyse the optical data. The sensor abilities for both machines were about equal, but the analytical abilities of the Base Jabber should be better than the "Jesta". (But we can

certain that it's an explosion flash.) But the pilot's response indicated that he too did not understand anything else either.

(We can be certain that the L1 junction there, but,)

"What is it?"

(We can't see it. At this distance, we should be able to see it now.)

Nigel felt goosebumps as there was a swoosh. He leaned his back on the linear seat as he looked at the space behind him. It seemed that both Daryl and Watts, in the "Jesta" and "Jesta Cannon" respectively, realized this as they stood on the Base Jabbers; they turned their heads around and turned their visored eyes upon him. Once the Minovsky Particles started to scatter, they had no way of pinpointing where the "Nahel Argama" was. The unknown ship in the same space region was the same too, but if the L1 junction was destroyed, one could imagine that they would not remain at the same place. "We didn't make it in time." Nigel turned his stare forward (Leader...) Daryl muttered, "Report back to the "General Revil" but Nigel ignored him as he spoke through the contact loop.

"The 'L1 junction' has changed. The target may have escaped from the area; to all patrol ships, please assist in looking for the target--"

(Emergency report! It's from the "General Revil")

Nigel felt a chill once he heard the Base Jabber interrupt him, and immediately answered as he gulped, "Read it.

(Yes. The observation team on the Moon side has confirmed the current location of the target. It moved from the 'L1 junction', and is moving through the shoal space region. Head over immediately, and pursue on as far as your fuel allows you to. Our ship will make full haste towards the junction. The preceding mission unit will immediately launch. That's all.)

What caused Nigel to gasp was not the fact that the "Nahel Argama" changed its course and went for the shoal space region, but the unnatural term 'secret mission unit' ringing at his ears. He recalled the face of the ringleader from the Vist Foundation, Alberto, who was now controlling the "General Revil", and frowned at the unspoken command, telling them to back down. *Is he scared of allies fighting against each other--no he wants us to revert back to the tactics for the original UC plan when we battle? This "Jesta" is built to accommodate the Unicorn-type mobile suit as a support carrier after all.*

"That guy...?"

The immature expression and the back that did not match the black pilot suit appeared in his mind. (Secret mission unit, as in...) Watts growled, "Just like what you see here." Nigel interrupted as he said.

"Once the data from the mothership reaches us, change our course and pursue the "Nahel Argama"."

There was nothing more to be said, except that this would be a long mission for them. (Understood) Daryl and Watts answered in unison, showing their gloom and realization ever since they got involved with the "Unicorn"; Nigel wordlessly operated the control stick.

The question was neither about whether the "Unicorn" pilot was a Newtype, or whether Newtypes exists. What annoyed him was the great fear humans had, to a point where they created a machine like the "Banshee", and even allowed for the existence of Cyber-Newtypes. *We don't need the power of that thing. We can beat the "Unicorn" with our strength with our own abilities.* With this determination, Nigel looked towards the shoal space region. In the midst of the stars twinkling, he still could not find the light of the "Nahel Argama".

Part 28[edit]

(The Anaheim electrowave scope has confirmed it. From the trajectory, there's a very large chance that the "Nahel Argama" is headed to "Industrial 7". If it is due to the actions of the Laplace Process, we can assume that place to be the final destination.)

Alberto's voice rang in the helmet, and there was no room to argue back."Industrial 7" was the place where everything began; it would be too coincidental to be a mere intermediate point. "Doesn't that place belong to Anaheim?" Riddhe looked at the system test window on the all-view monitor as he grumbled. (That is the case for the colony itself.) Alberto, who should be in the second communication room, answered back.

(However, the colony builder "Magellanica" is different. The Vist residence was moved there from Earth; Cardeas himself directed the move, and the Foundation has no interference with Anaheim. The secret organisation working under the leader directly may have done something.)

"They buried their treasure under their house?"

(That's not impossible. Don't forget that we're born in families with their fair share of troubles.)

His mind was not in the mood to give a bitter smile in the face of such a sarcastic remark. *Whatever, as long as I can beat the "Unicorn" and prevent the "Box" from being opened--anything goes as long as I prove that my choice isn't wrong.*(Hatch opened. Romeo 008, please head to the catapult deck.) Riddhe heard the voice of the communication officer as he suppressed his agitated heart and stepped on the pedal cautiously. The "Banshee" moved its sole forward, and as the "General Revil" launching deck was surrounded by vacuum, and there was a deep tremor.

(The Neo Zeon ship from Side 6 is headed to the shoal region too. At the rate they're headed, they'll reach the "Nahel Argama" faster than you do. However, don't worry about any other enemies and just get rid of it before it reaches "Industrial 7". We'll catch up soon.)

The control light above the hatch showed a green light. Riddhe let the "Banshee" move forward as its feet were connected to the catapult. There were no other allied machine, and the "Banshee" was the only one headed to the target as it would get on the Base Jabber outside the deck. Of course, once the "General Revil" arrive, 4 mobile suit platoons would sortie, but Riddhe did not hope to wait until that moment. *I must be the one to end it all. The "Banshee" has enough capabilities for this.*

"Even if I'm not a Cyber-Newtype, I'll have complete control over it."

I'll control it as a normal human frustrated over this world that has not changed. (Course clear, Romeo 008, please proceed for launch.) The operator's voice rang as he thought, and he gathered strength in his pubes.

"Romeo 008, "Banshee", launching!"

The catapult was activated, and the launch G force struck him. Riddhe felt his normal vision narrow as he widened his eyes and looked forward. The black machine had the Beam Magnum in its right hand, the shield in its left hand, and the Hyper Bazooka on its backpack as it was shot out from its catapult deck. The golden horn reflected the sunlight as the "Banshee" left the "General Revil".

There were many numerous stars in the endless space where he was headed, where Banagher, Mineva, and the place where everything began, where the space battlefield was. The "Banshee" ferried the realization and guts of the person as it glided through the dark vacuum.

Volume 9 – Over the Rainbow, pt.1

Chapter 1[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The poison called tobacco, which was once almost extinct in the old ages, still lingered in the days of Universal Century 0096. This was the result of tobacco quality improving as a result of the space age, like the reduction of tar to reduce the negative effects on the human body and the intricate machines, and the development of chemicals that combust at low temperatures in tobacco, but most people felt that the biggest reason for the revival of tobacco was the One Year War.

The generals frowning at each other in the Operations Conference room, the senators and government officials flabbergasted by the damage reports that kept coming were the same as the frontline soldiers. To humanity, which lost almost half its population, and its latter half was at the brink of danger, tobacco became a solace that could reduce the pressure they never had before. The principle to ban smoking in government offices and the parliamentary halls were quickly abandoned, and in periods of war, tobacco stench were around, whether it was the conference rooms or the rest rooms. This bad habit continued even after the war, and in Dakar, there were continuous signs of senators taking at least on stick. Even the Settlement Issues Council, which involved important figures from both ruling and opposition parties, were of no exception—no, it was because there were a lot of experienced veterans from the War and after it, and the percentage of smokers were extremely high—it was already a common theme seeing the exhaled smoke float around the conference room.

“I suppose silence means consent…it’s fine, right?”

Even so, the smoke today was extremely severe. Ronan Marcenas waved his hand to shake off the smoke, and looked at the faces of the crowd seated around the round table.

“The military has also observed the destruction of the ‘L1 Junction’. The “Nahel Argama” is currently headed to the shoal space region, and a Neo Zeon fleet is out in full arms to ambush this. From this, we can conclude that there’s a high chance of the “Laplace Box” being in the shoal space region.”

32 members of the Senate Council were gathered at the 111 meeting room in the Dakar Senate Headquarters, and the ranks, led by Ronan on the Upper House Chairman seat, were the cadres of the respective ruling parties, their sleep disheveled hair and droopy eyes lingering in the smoke. The time was GMT 0500 and 2 hours had passed since the phone call notifying them about an emergency meeting. The Settlement Issues Council, the bipartisan organization which deals with the many issues regarding Spacenoids, sends them to the Senate for clean up, and decided the fates of the Spacenoids that numbered in more than millions—they were what the media called the shadow parliament. It was not rare for them, who had such great responsibility, to gather in the middle of the night, and because of the terrorist attack on Dakar, many senators were already gathered here, which meant that there were no absentees. But when dealing with the topic at hand, many of them looked dull and unreliable, completely different from how they were when they were pulling votes.

All of them gave extremely awkward expressions, merely puffing smoke out, giving expressions that clearly showed they did not want to make decisions. It was true this was a common theme people would do when starting a meeting, but the topic at hand was not ordinary. *These guys know this already,* Ronan cursed in his heart. They knew that the strange happenings that had been around this past month were all because of the “Laplace Box”, and they knew that the end of all these events was right in front of them. He knew that all of them inherited their current positions from their ancestors, covering the secret of the “Box” together. *In this sense, we’re the ones who have to clear the 100-year lie.*

“In that case, please hurry in the mobilization of the space army and seal off the shoal space region. We’ll eliminate the Neo Zeon fleet, return the “Nahel Argama” to our military, secure the “Laplace Box” and then bring it under our governance. We’ve decided on what we have to do, and if nobody’s going to propose a plan B, I want to discuss about how to execute it. What do you think?”

The situation continued to develop during this time. It was an undisclosed meeting with guards keeping a tight watch, and Ronan still felt repulsed about having to mention the “Box” over and over again, but he could not let the senators look on with sleepy eyes. He said it with the intention of waking them up, but their responses were still slow. In the midst of this silence, when the sound of the clock ticking could ostensibly be heard, “It’s easier said than done to mobilize the entire army to maintain security.” A senator, who was also the president of the ruling party’s construction ministry, let out this vague voice,

“Looking at the nature of this incident, we mustn’t reveal this to the world, and we won’t be able to satisfy the condition of mobilizing the army. What do we do?”

“And Muar’s the current legislation chief!” The senator in charge of agriculture leaned on his seat beside the other man. “I don’t think the legislation council will agree easily, especially with the media raising the issues of the Second Neo Zeon war to shake the hearts of the people. If we’re to mobilize a large force, they’ll be looks from the people of the world.”

All their stares were gathered on John Bauer, seated opposite Ronan. This important man from the national defense committee, reputed to be the cause of shaking the hearts of the people, did not mind the blaming stares as he continued to look aloof. Ronan held back his sigh, “It’s because of this…” he probed his body onto the table as he said.

“It’s because Senator Bauer paved the path for us that it’s easier for us to mobilize the enemy. The recent spate of terrorist attacks has caused public opinion to lean towards the eradication of Neo Zeon. With the assistance of everyone here, I suppose we can break down the interference of the legislation council, right?”

Of course, these were not sincere words, all of them knew that Bauer’s actions were only to ensure the continual existence of Londo Bell, which his helped set up, an act for the sake of maintaining the military industry. Ronan did not continue to look at Bauer, who deliberately looked away, and looked at the faces of all those present. “Isn’t this too much of a wishful thinking?” One of the six female senators interrupted as she put out the cigarette on the ash tray.

“The media does adore Neo Zeon as they are biased towards Spacenoids. They’re still insisting on that old logic, saying that the source of all the mishaps is the incompetence of the Federation.”

“And it was just revealed that ECOAS was involved in the battle of “Palau”.”

“Using the term eradicate is very…the initial plan was to settle all issues gradually with the dissolvement of the Republic, right? If we’re going to do such an extreme action at this time, won’t we end up obstructing the space army realignment plan and have no support in this end?”

“The Vist Foundation has a clear view on all this, which is why they can control the Senate Council however they want to. How about we give up on ensuring the “Box” at this time and try leaving it again? If the “Box” is going to be opened, the Foundation will be grabbed by the throat.”

“But what Chairman Ronan said about this being a good chance to take them down is true. They’re fighting over a family squabble now, and they haven’t formally decided on a leader, right?”

“You say it as if it’s easy. If Neo Zeon is defeated, your party will be the first one to ask for a revision over the realignment plan, right?”

“You’ve been insisting that the money used to build a mobile suit can build many old folks homes, right?”

“This is already the instinctive action of the largest opposition party; it’s a different theme from what we’re talking about.”

This barefaced saying caused a tired amusement to ripple through the Senate room. Ronan slammed his fist into the table to negate that uneasy tremor.

“People, I hope you can understand the importance of this incident.”

The members hid their smiles and went quiet as they gathered their stares on the Chairman. Ronan cupped his aching fist with his other hand as he looked at the stares of the many people through the smoke of the cigarettes.

“We’ve been protecting the secret of the “Box”. The meaning of the existence of this Senate Council, the authority that can decide the Spacenoid administrations are all based on this. In the aspect of wanting to get power in our hopes to secure the “Box”, we’re on the same path as the Vist Foundation.”

Ronan stood up without letting anyone have the room to argue back. The photos of the Council Chairmans hanging on the wall entered his eyes, “Sometimes, I wonder…” and he immediately looked away to say calmly,

“If Zeon grew prosperous before the One Year War began, and if I took up this position before that, what would I do? Will I open the promised future in the “Box” to prevent Zeon’s insurgence?”

All the people seated at the round seat inadvertently felt chills and turned their faces away in an awkward manner. Ronan continued to look at the photos of the past Chairmans that had never changed, exchanged a short glance with his already deceased father, “Of course, the answer is no.” he answered himself and lowered his stare.

“Our fathers had this thought before, and continued to implement silence to protect the regimentation of the Federation inherited from our forefathers. But in the end, the One Year War happened. ‘Zeon assault can’t be predicted’, or ‘these happened before we knew about the existence of the “Box”’, we can’t use them as excuses. If we wanted to prevent them, we might have been able to do so, but the Senate Council sat by to watch half of humanity killed, and has the same crime as Zeon.”

“That’s…” an elderly senator spoke with a bitter smile. “Don’t tell me you never thought of it.” Ronan hushed up the other man, and slowly strolled down the circumference of the round table.

“And we, who had the complete inheritance, are unable to acquit ourselves of this crime. This is a guilt we have to bear forever, and we’re not allowed to bring it into our graves. As long as the Earth Federation continues to existence, we will have to bear the secret that taints our descendants with blood.”

Riddhe’s expression when he learnt the truth in that office lit by the sunset appeared for a fleeting moment in Ronan’s eyes. There were people putting their elbows on the table as they leaned forward, and there were those leaning on their chairs as they looked into space. They were children, but also parents; Ronan looked around and stared at the faces of these people, “This isn’t something we can leave it to others.” He continued, and set aside the face in his memory.

“It’ll be best if we can use this chance to get the “Box” and bury it completely. However, the more pressing thing is to maintain the current situation and prevent anyone from approaching the “Box”. This isn’t the time to consider the benefits for our political parties, or even our personal problems; we have a mission to protect this secret, and we’re betting on the billions of lives that died during the One Year War.”

He circled the round table once, and placed his hand on the Chairman’s seat that appeared in front of his eyes again. “I hope that

we'll have a fruitful discussion after we consider all these." Ronan concluded and let his heavier body sink into the seat.

Nobody wanted to look at each other or speak up, but even so, the political considerations and the forces, tangible and intangible, supporting the council were not to be ignored. He thought of the costs and benefits of the options, whether it was necessary to protect the "Box" in such an adhersive manner, and compared it to the current reality; in the end, tired breaths merely came out with the smoke, and a silent time proceeded. At this moment, John Bauer lifted his head and spoke up for the first time on this day, "I can understand your concerns, Chairman Ronan." Ronan had no intention of accepting the words of this old friend and colleague as he looked back with a wary look.

"But we're able to get to the lowest seat of this senate because of the support of the people. If we act while ignoring the wills of the supporting parties, we won't be able to fulfill the mission you said of, Chairman. At this situation, we need to first calm down and make our decisions—"

"What if Neo Zeon gets the "Box" while we're doing so? Do you think you can use political means to overturn the Second Coming of Char? It's rumored that that man has relations with the Republic."

"That's the point. If the Republic's supporting from behind, there's still room for negotiations, like the delay of self-autonomy or something…"

"And what if they ask for inordinate requests? It's fine to continue keeping your votes for the sake of maintaining the needs for war, but I don't want a replay of the One Year War to happen again."

"You're too hasty in your conclusions. No matter whether it has the "Box" or not, Zeon's fate is flickering in the windlike a candle. It is rude of me to say so, Chairman Ronan, but aren't you being a little too paranoid? It seems that you're overrating the existence of the "Box"."

Bauer said with an emotionless expression, and there were several senators around them showing looks that they understood this very well as they looked at Ronan. These unexpected words rendered Ronan speechless, and he suspected if these words were of reality as he looked back at Bauer's face wordlessly.

Bauer was the head of the Defense Ministry, based in the Anaheim Electronics, and would be the one most scared of the opportunists' words when the space army realignment program were to be subjected to setback, but Ronan never thought that he would say this

was just paranoid. *Is he saying the restraining bolt and sacrifices over these hundred years were all the result of paranoia? Is he saying that the world won't change no matter whether the "Box" is opened? That the tragedy of the One Year War will never be avoided no matter what? Do we fear something that has no value, threatening those who did not know its true identity? Are we flaunting our authority without purpose?*

Impossible. The moment Ronan concluded, he had a fleeting thought this might be the case, and he temporarily felt the feeling of being dangled in the air. To a man like Bauer—the intangible block called the public, that firm, incomprehensible and entity might be the case. The words carved on the "Box" might just be a chain of words, and it itself had no power to change the world. The "Box" could only fulfill its power that can topple the current regimentation with the help of those people with the hearts to respond to the 'promised future'. He knew all about this, but he continued to fear the "Box"; was it because he was a direct member of the Marcenas family that had a direct involvement in the "Box", or was he feeling somewhat melancholic about the dream of the 'promised future' that still lingered in his heart? Ronan could not conclude as he looked forward with a stiff mask. At this moment, he discovered that the door at the edge of his vision was opened.

The door was forbidden to be opened until the meeting was over. Ronan looked over at the door together with everyone else, who turned around in shock, saw the face of a woman who passed through the door the guards opened without any concerns, and felt his gulped breath stuck at his throat

"Pardon me for interrupting the meeting."

Martha Vist Carbine said this line to brush off the many stares on her as she walked over. *Why is this woman here?* Ronan glared at the guards standing at the door, looked at the officer's uniform that proceeded into the room, and gasped again. There were three large stars on the rank, reflecting the light off his shoulders; this was not the first time Ronan saw the officer, and the latter overwhelmed the guards with his authority as he entered. This face belonged to the man, the Chief of Staff for the entire Federation military.

Even though he was the leader of the army brass that was under the command of the Senate Council, it would require lots of courage for him to enter this room. Ronan looked at the stiff expression of this Admiral, ascertained that he had the same interests as that of the Foundation, and turned his stare towards Martha, who was walking to the Chairman's seat. This was probably the first time they met face to

face, but Ronan did not feel this way. It felt as if they both involved the military, and Ronan had been able to see this face all this time. Perhaps Martha too felt the same way as she gave a thin smile, her eyes showing a trace of closeness, and she brought her face close to Ronan's eyes. The tobacco stench filling the room faded away, and what came was a sharp agitating scent of perfume stimulating around his nostrils.

"I have something urgent to talk about, Chairman Ronan. Can I have a word with you?"

"Sorry, but we're in the middle of an emergency meeting as well. Do say anything you want here, but keep it short."

Ronan did not look away from the Senator who were scrutinizing him, and answered her with an unhushed voice. He had a thought ingrained deep within him, that if she were to gain the initiative here, everyone else would have an opportunity. Martha however smiled with an expression, indicating that she knew beforehand. "You understand too, right?" she muttered again.

"It's useless to talk with these people. The "Box" is our family's issue, and we have to settle it ourselves."

Ronan resisted the urge to raise his eyebrows as he continued to stare at Martha, who narrowed her eyes as she seemed to have witnessed the proceedings in the meeting. "I have a secret way to deal with this." she spoke without leaving an opening.

"If you allow us, Chairman, this plan can be executed immediately. Do you have any interest?"

"…You're asking the obvious. This isn't something a lady should be doing."

"Women always want to be certain, especially when we're lacking in time."

She said sweetly, but there was a sense of urgency deep within her eyes. Martha too was anxious, and nobody other than her could experience this urgency to prevent the "Box" from being opened. Ronan sighed heavily, looked around at the faces that amounted more than 30, trying to find an opportunity to grasp a foothold, and used this chance to get up from the Chairman's seat.

"I'll be back." He said to the vice-chairman beside him, but understood very well that he would not be coming back. He followed Martha out as the latter proceeded first, and walked out of the meeting room. He

sensed the cold atmosphere of the term secret method, and as he felt goosebumps rise on his skin, he passed through the door. The unnerving expressions of the past chairmans caused his back to ache more than the cold stares of the other senators.

Part 2[edit]

The 3 dimension holographic map shown on the main monitor showed a straight arrow of light from the bottom to the top, intersecting an arrow reaching in from the left side. The intersection point let out a red flickering light, and the side showed the estimated time of arrival and the closest distance values.

“This is the predicted path of the Tennyson fleet from Side 6. We just sent out a laser communicator signal 6 hours ago, so the values shouldn’t be wrong.”

Flaste Schole said. Since this was the man who was part of the crew that occupied the “Nahel Argama” just 5 hours ago, and intended to work with that fleet, there was no greater prediction than this. Otto Mitas got up from his Captain’s seat, and looked carefully at the many markers flickering on the monitor. Liam Borrinea and the other bridge crew held their breaths as they stared at the enemy’s fleet blocking their path.

“There are 9 Musaka-class ships, and another 6 different disguised ships of all sizes. They’re not holding bac on this large attack at all, and if we keep this up, we’ll face them head on in the shoal space region. The ETA is 08:17…less than 3 hours.”

Flaste said as he looked at his watch and then looked over at Otto. *Are you serious?* The latter avoided the stare as he gave this expression, and proceeded to ask his sensor operator, “What’s the movement of Frontal’s squadron?” The operator started to work on the console Flaste worked on before,

“Looking at the final observations of the optical sensors, it seems they’re planning to meet with their own fleet. Considering the durability of the subflight systems, I don’t think they’ll head straight to “Industrial 7”.”

“What about Frontal’s mothership, the “Rewloola”?”

“It’s outside our range. I don’t know where Frontal’s fleet launched from, but looking at the plug-in fuel tanks of the SFS, my guess is that they’re 80,000km away from the main fleet. It’ll take them half a day to proceed here at maximum speed.”

“I heard that the “Rewloola” is bringing 2 Musaka-classes along. Maybe they don’t intend to meet up with Tennyson’s fleet, but is headed to “Industrial 7” straight away. In this case, Frontal may use the “Rewloola” as a base to look for the “Box”.”

Flaste continued, and while Otto noticed the side of the man’s face that stood beside them complete, *this man is younger than he looks* he wondered about this completely unimportant thing. “What do you think, First Officer?” he turned behind to look, and Liam, with her hand on her injured shoulder, “It’s very likely.” She answered without hesitation.

“Once the squad regroups, they’ll head straight for “Industrial 7”. There’s a chance they’ll be stranded, but that’s a fine move not to scatter their forces. That man will definitely do it.”

“In that case, we’ll have to face one large fleet.”

The Captain’s simple summation of the entire situation brought a heavy and silent atmosphere upon the bridge. It had been more than 5 hours since they left the collapsed ‘L1 Junction’ and head off to the shoal space region. They did not have any time to think as they were too busy detaining the Zeon Republic soldiers in the ship and restoring the operations of each department, but at this point, the pressure came right at them. Otto felt abnormally awake due to the extreme sleep deprivation, and looked at the markers shown on the screen. While the “Nahel Argama” was wounded, almost devoid of its remaining ammunitions and transport vehicles, there were 15 enemy ships. He knew, without anyone reminding him, how reckless it was. “Aid from Londo Bell…I don’t think we can hope for it.” Liam’s passing words brought a heaviness worth sighing over beside Otto’s ears.

“Yeah. We’re the ones being hunted down by the entire military, and Fleet Commander Bright is being redeployed. There’s no one we can reason with; if we’re not careful, we might even be attacked.”

“But we know the location of the “Box”. As long as we report there’s a threat that Neo Zeon will capture it, Londo Bell can act independently, right?”

Mihiro Oiwakken said as she sat on the communication operator seat. Her firm expression showed that there was a need to say this, and Otto was dumbstruck by this. “It’s useless.” However, Liam first spoke up,

“If we don’t know the true identity of the “Box”, there’s no way we can determine the threat it brings. If we want Londo Bell to take action, it’ll have to be once we confirm the contents.”

“How can that be…! In that case—”

“There’s no room for us to make a detour and avoid the enemy’s ambush. If we don’t hurry to “Industrial 7” as soon as possible, Frontal will reach there first.”

Liam spoke with a voice not allowing for any optimism, and turned her stare to the Captain’s seat. Otto looked at her eyes that showed that she was ready to go all in, “How many mobile suits are we going to expect?” he asked Flaste.

“The maximum capacity for the Musaka-class is 6, and the disguised ships have varying ones, but they can probably hold about 3 or so.”

“In other words…” the sensor operator looked up at the screen, ostensibly calculating in his mind, “…72 of them.” and went pale,

“The only ones we can deploy are the “ReZEL”, the “Stark Jegan” and the “Unicorn”. They outnumber us 24 to 1…”

Liam muttered, and Otto felt the chill of despair rise from below his feet, creating a freezing atmosphere. “No, it’s 12 to 1.” He said as he left the Captain’s seat.

“We can still mobilize another 3 units.”

His magnetic soles landed on the floor, and he looked back at the stunned faces of everyone present. “The “Kshatriya”?” Liam asked in lieu of every person present, and Otto affirmed it with his stare.

“What about the other two?” The ECOAS “Lotos” can’t be counted in this as they can only replace the cannons.”

With Liam giving a suspicious look, Otto turned his back on her and looked towards Flaste, who seemed to have realized this. He approached Flaste and asked, “Can you help?” As the latter’s face cringed, Mihiro ostensibly swallowed some words and looked away.

“Your “Geara Zulus” are still around, and though one of them lost an arm, but it can still defend a ship, I suppose?”

“…Is this really alright? It’s said that those who betrayed once will do so again.”

Flaste answered with a bitter smile as he lowered his face. Otto too lowered his head as he looked at the expression devoid of any smiling intent. “I won’t force you.” He said as he reached his hand to touch his cap.

“We’ll immediately send a launch that will depart for the Republic’s

army. You can ride on board and leave this ship as well. It's all your ship."

Flaste widened his eyes as he averted them, and lifted his head as if he was had. Otto however did not look at him as he turned to Liam and the rest, "The same goes for the rest as well." He spoke with a voice that bellowed through the bridge.

"I said before that there's no need to accompany me to my death over such a foolish thing, and this feeling remains the same even at this point. For those who want to leave the ship, I'll lend a launch. Just tell me. In this space region, there'll be a ship who can receive a distress signal immediately."

The navigation and cannons operators seated at the consoles in front wordlessl looked over Liam's shoulders and stared at Otto. *If I don't want to lose anyone else, how can I lose anyone?* Otto suppressed the true thoughts rising in his heart, "But those who want to stay, please be prepared." he continued and looked at everyone present.

"We're the only ones present. As for whether we want to take action, or whether this is the correct decision, we have to decide it itself. Everyone has to think and make their own decisions. I won't charge you on your responsibilities as a soldier, but the responsibility you need to take up should be in your hearts."

There were people with unfaltering looks, and there were those who looked down in doubt. Once he was certain of their reactions, "Notify the ship. I hope all personnel leaving the ship are to gather at the deck in 20 minutes." Otto finally turned to Mihiro and said this, and the petite figure answered in a flustered manner as she looked away. Otto removed his cap, let the wind blow on his heating head, and walked towards the window in front of him without looking at anyone else in the eyes.

There was still some distance to the shoal space region, and the "Nahel Argama" was surrounded by a stretch of endless space, without any space debris passing by. *The "Laplace Box" that had the power to topple the world, the Second Coming of Char, the "Unicorn Gundam" that was the key to opening the "Box"*—he reflected on the things that had nothing to do with him a month ago, wondered about how peculiar it was, and looked at the stars afar. His wife's face appeared in his mind, but it did not bring about the pain he imagined; *there goes my retirement funds* this self-depreciating voice was the only thing that echoed in his heart.

Part 3[edit]

The aft landing deck was as its name described, a one-way passage used for transport craft to return to the ship, but it also had a function to let small launchs fly off. The insides and external appearances were not too different from the catapult deck, but the scene of the 4 old-styled launchses docked on both ends of this extremely tall deck resembled the idiosyncratic atmosphere of a a mobile suit hangar.

At this point, two of these launches were dragged to the middle of the airlock, and a group of men dressed in thick green normal suits were boarding the launch. It was under zero gravity, but the feet of those 30 men or more were abnormally heavy. It felt as if their bodies were srinking for every step they took with their magnetic soles. There were guards wielding recoiless rifles standing around them, giving watchful stares at the group boarding the launch. However, anyone could tell they were not going to do anything.

They—the Zeon Republic soldiers, lost. They lost their motherships, their comrades, and were to be divided into two launches and abandoned into space. Banagher Links did not dare to say he could understand the attitude of a soldier, as what their ideals entails were completely beyond his imagination, but their dangling expressions gave him a rough sense of familiarity. He looked at the faces of those soldiers who were most in their twenties sidelong. ‘Disjointed’…this would most likely be the term that could explain their psychological mood. They could not associate themselves with the current reality; even though they were present, there was a sense of isolation—

“We’re included the water and food for the mobile suits that are floating around. Once you leave the ship, please proceed to save them. The ‘L1 Junction’ collapse meant that the military and media will get into action. There’ll be a ship that will save you here.”

Audrey Burne spoke to the Sub-Lieutenant acting as representative for the Republic soldiers. She had removed her regal cape, but she was still dressed in formal Neo Zeon uniform, and this must have been one of the reasons why the Republic soldiers felt disjointed. Banagher, Conroy Haagensen and Gael Chan were sending them off in name, but their faces were giving off uneasy looks as they stared at Audrey from behind. “Yes…” The sub-lieutenant looked down as he answered, looked back at their one and only royal heir Mineva Zabi, and then looked around with a lost expression.

“…None of the crew on this ship is leaving.”

It had been almost 30 minutes since the broadcast to gather all departers echoed through the ship. The Sub-Lieutenant saw that no one else was going to leave from this landing deck, and looked back at

Audrey. “Why?” He asked with a troubled expression.

“It’s suicidal to take on the main fleet of the “Sleeves” as a single ship, so why…what do you believe in? The Side co-prosperity ring the Second Coming of Char described about will bring a whole new future to Spacenoids, but why, as the Princess of Zeon, are You denying this —”

“I’m not denying it. if there’s really this ideal, it’s possible to try it in this world. However, I can’t accept using the power of the “Laplace Box” to simply protect ourselves.”

Audrey silently answered as she stood unflinchingly on the deck. The Sub-Lieutenant was the highest ranked amongst the stragglers, but he was still considered a youth. Banagher saw his face contort sidelong, and his mouth kept shuddering, but he was speechless.

“The world will change, and it has to change. Thus, when we change, we have to be change cautiously. If we want to change simply because we’re unhappy about the state of the world, that’s no different from a child crying in the darkness. We need to open our eyes wide and walk towards the path with the light…once you do that, and once you think of using the light you see to spread it through the entire world, that’s when you need to summon the courage to take action.”

Audrey’s words were clear. It was true that if he felt ‘disjointed’ by the world and hoped for changes, he could not fear his own change. Banagher deeply felt his heart engraved by this change over this past month or so, and it resonated with her words. He gently clenched his palms as the blood of life flowed to his fingertips, and made his decision not to be lost again as he looked forward. “Change yourself first, you say…?” The Sub-Lieutenant asked, and she nodded back, “This is my personal view.” Audrey smiled.

“Even if the crew on this ship have their different thoughts, there is one thing we all believe in.”

“And that is…?”

“We won’t die, and we won’t lose, for the beast of possibilities will protect us.”

“The beast…of possibilities…” The Sub-Lieutenant repeated these words, and seemed to have recalled something as he looked back. Banagher inadvertently cringed his chin back and adjusted his posture. The Sub-Lieutenant looked at the pilot suit Banagher had been wearing since the previous night, and lowered his face weakly. “Were we wrong…” he said with a practically vanishing voice.

“That’s not something I can decide. The outcome of the upcoming battle will most likely change the direction of the Zeon Republic greatly, but no matter what this outcome is, you’re the ones supporting the country. Don’t be lost because of other people’s words, including mine.”

The Sub-Lieutenant lowered his head and bit his lips hard, before straightening his back to look at Audrey’s face. His slightly damp eyes ostensibly reflected the light off the deck, his heels clicked as he brought them together, and he stood still with a proper salute as he stood on the deck.

“You’re our Queen after all.”

He did not wait for a return salute, and turned around to walk towards the launch his subordinates were in. They were about to head back to their country, and would certainly face a cruel fate. They would definitely be court-martialled, and even worse, there was the possibility that the Defense Minister would shut them up to hide his involvement with Neo Zeon. However, this prediction would not be able to scare the Sub-Lieutenant at this moment. Banagher watched him leave, and Audrey stood there adamantly, her back etched deeply into his eyes. The Sub-Lieutenant did not say anything else as he left the scene.

He went past the airlock of the landing deck, and went right towards the container block behind the partition wall. The beast of possibilities, the “Unicorn”, was inside there. What he could do at this moment was just to prepare it for everything. He seemed to sense the blurry hot air flowing in the ship clear up, injecting life into his body and mind again. Banagher was driven by this emotion as he floated out to the container block.

The containers of all sizes were fastened along the partition wall, and this place not only contained the spare supplies, but also became a storage for the supplies the “Garencieres” brought in. at this point, all the mechanics were mobilized and transporting the goods. As the sounds of the cranes and sirens activated resonated, the cargo carrier moved the black barrel of the Beam Gatling gun. “Okay, it’s fine!” A familiar voice was mixed in the metallic sounds, and Banagher stepped off the floor to float there. “Takuya!” He called out. “Oh!” Takuya Irei in turn raised his hand, grabbed Banagher by the leg as the latter was almost about to go past him, and pulled the cargo palette over in a refined manner.

“Can the Full Armor Plan work?”

“We’re letting Mr Aaron do the final analysis. Don’t worry, we’ll make it in time for the final battle.”

He showed the grin of a veteran mechanic, and soon after, “How’s the fastening?” he heard a yell, and shrugged his shoulders. “It’s done!” He shouted with all he had, “Let’s move out!” and the cargo carrier ferrying the 6 Beam Gatling guns rumbled. “Go and get some rest first.” Takuya said, and his back faded away. The cargo carrier moving down the rail on the floor was headed to the large gate with the opened shutter; on the other end was a wide mobile suit deck space with fresh burn marks after a fire. The Beam Gatling guns that were moved would probably be equipped onto the “Unicorn”, as according to Takuya’s plan to increase its armaments, and were to fulfill their purposes as indispensable parts in forming the “Full Armor Unicorn”.

These were originally Neo Zeon weapons that were docked on the “Garencieres”, and it was proven in battle that they were highly compatible with the “Unicorn”, but they did not know whether there would be any troubles if they were to activate many of them at one go. This was not the time to rest, and Banagher was intending to follow the cargo carrier to the mobile suit deck. “Follow his advice and rest.” But a voice came from above, causing him to lift his head and look over. *Miss Marida,* before he could speak up, the soft profile dressed in pilot suit filled his sights, and the body floating in the air slowly descended to the floor.

“I understand that you can’t calm down, but you’re the ace of this ship. If you don’t act composed, everyone else will feel uneasy.”

She did not look away as she supported Banagher, whose feet did not land on the floor, and spoke. The voice and attitude was undoubtedly that of Marida Cruz, who once shared her soul with him. His shoulder that was grabbed let out a jolt, and his body relaxed unconditionally;

was this because of the sensation back then lingered in his heart, or was it a biological phenomenon of his body being unrestrained. Banagher scented the sweetness of her body aroma that was different from Audrey's, looked away awkwardly, and forced out a line, "How can that be, Miss Marida, you're…" Marida showed a smile.

"The "Kshatriya" can't stand on the frontline now, because you beat it up real good."

The casual reply caused the sweet atmosphere to subside. She was brought to Earth, her soul was toyed with, her body was tortured, she was forced to fight against her will, and fell to the brink of death. The one opportunity that caused her to experience this month of pain was definitely the moment when she went up against the berserk "Unicorn". The machine, and even Marida herself could not be said to be completely fine. Upon thinking about this, Banagher lowered his head with a wordless expression. "I'm joking. Don't make such an expression." Marida noted wryly and prodded him on the head.

"I'll be your rearguard. The forward needs to have strength and stamina, so just go and sleep, even if it's for 30 minutes."

"Alright then…erm, Miss Marida, did you speak with the Captain?"

The reason why he suddenly asked this was probably because it was rare to see her talk so much. The back that was about to leave jerked, and she turned her head around slightly. "he's still in the detention room?" She spoke with a barely audible voice, and as Banagher nodded, he realized that Zinnerman had been avoiding him too.

"Go talk with him."

Marida said quietly as her back was turned to him. "But…" Banagher's reply was filled with doubt. "I suppose this is for the better." The sidelong face looking afar suppressed Banagher's voice that was about to give a suggestion.

"Some things can only be said easily amongst men, right?"

She spoke with a voice not hoping for any answers, and the back profile kicked the floor and left. Marida grabbed the Beam Gatling gun that just passed by from above and said something to the mechanic. Banagher did not look at her again and he looked at the airlock on the starboard partition wall. He recalled the path leading to the detention room in the gravity block, and his emotions felt heavy, creating a feeling that he could not lift his soles.

He got off the elevator, and there was a weak rumbling sound from the

aft, shaking the body that had become a prisoner to gravity slightly. The launch the Republic soldiers were on had probably left. A moment of tranquil returned to the gravity block, and nothing could be heard other than the the cylinder creating the centrifuge gravity. Banagher felt his body become heavier for every step he took, and walked down the passage that still had some gunpowder stench. The room he was headed to was about 30m in front of him, down the round gradual arching corridor.

Nobody ordered Zinnerman to enter the room, and the door was not locked, but he would not come out. He went in, locked the metal door, and remained silent without talking to anyone. Banagher stood in front of the metal door covering the presence of a human within like the other detention rooms, and wanted to look inside and see the situation inside; however, he frowned because he realized his own timidity. He took a deep breath, knocked on the door as a matter of formality, and opened it without waiting for a response.

There were cushions all over the detention room's walls, meant to prevent self-mutilation, and was often kept dark to save power. Suberoa Zinnerman was leaning on the wall, spacing out as he sat down, ostensibly clasping onto a shadow in the dimness. He remained unmoved even as the light shone in from the door, and merely rolled his eyes to look at Banagher. Banagher exerted strength into his lower body, steadied himself from being pushed aside by that pressure, and stared at Zinnerman's black eyes standing at the door.

"The escape launch was used."

Banagher let out these unexpected words from his opened mouth, and went silent for a while. Zinnerman blinked two, three times, and lowered his head in an ostensibly disinterested manner.

"If you want to stay here, go up to the bridge. We're going to meet the Neo Zeon fleet. You know some of the internal workings, so you can at least give some suggestions, right?"

It was not the time to talk about such things. Banagher was driven by the rising anxiety that arose with this separation, and grabbed onto the metal grille of the opened door, staying there as he was unable to make the decision and step inside. He looked away from the silent Zinnerman, and looked at the shadow reaching out from his feet. The ship's broadcast seemed to have notified something, but his heart had no room to listen to the contents carefully.

"Miss Marida and Mr Flaste are helping out, but you're hiding in such a place, Captain—"

“I’m no longer Captain.”

Banagher was interrupted by this hoarse voice, and lifted his head. Zinnerman continued to look at the wall, the whites of his eyes appearing in the darkness, before the light vanished as he closed his eyelids again.

“My ship’s sunk, those guys I’m ordering have disappeared, those who were once my subordinates are now acting on their own judgement.”

“IN THAT CASE, WHAT ARE YOU!?”

This voice unwittingly boomed, reaching the cushions on the wall, and vanished without echo. Banagher looked away from Zinnerman, whose face was unmoving like a corpse, and averted his stare towards the dimness beside the door.

“I want to think that we have no relationship now…! But it can’t be helped; you’re still Captain to me. If I break away from you now, I will disappear.”

The body in the darkness let out a trembling presence, but Banagher was not in the mood to ascertain. *Because of you, I can live. Your complicated life told me the truth to this world, your gentleness teaches me to live on even so. Because of such sadness, people continue to live to erase them*—these words were etched deep inside his heart, and even one or two betrayals were unable to erase them. Banagher exerted more strength onto his fingertips on the metal grille, and looked at Zinnerman again,

“You set Marida free and saved Audrey, didn’t you? It’s a different thing for the others, so why did you—”

“It’s not that easy to take the first step from where I was from. There’s a price.”

Zinnerman interrupted Banagher’s words and lifted his face. Banagher was at a loss of words as he looked at the other man sidelong.

“Whether it’s the people on this ship, the “Garencieres” team… princess and you, everyone paid the price. Some have given up on their stable lives, their positions as soldiers, the beliefs and pride that had been supporting them, and for some, their lives.”

The face of Daguza Mackle flashed by his mind, and the voice of Loni Garvey he heard on the battlefield of Dakar whiffed by fleetingly. These were the lives of those who were not scared of change, and took the first step to save him—Zinnerman’s rough hands were cupped together, “I gave up everything.” He spoke with a hoarse voice.

“Responsibility, hatred, I abandoned everything that formed myself. What I am now is merely an empty shell. Tell Gael that I don’t have any strength to bear responsibility or anything now.”

“Tell Mr Gael…?”

“He was the one who asked you to talk to me, right?”

“No, Miss Marida said. She asked if I can talk with you.”

The black eyes widened in a faltering manner, letting out a glint deep inside the darkness. “Marida…?” Banagher heard Zinnerman mutter and not do anything after; he truly felt that he could not pass through this door. “I’m losing something gradually for the sake of change…” he unwittingly muttered in his mouth, and again stared into the gathered darkness. Zinnerman however did not say anything, and he did not lift his head.

“But you managed to get something in return, right?”

There were no more words to be said, and he retreated from the door. “I’ll leave this open.” Banagher said and left the detention room. He felt a sense of helplessness spread in his heart for every step he took, and returned back to the elevator. The ajar door let out a thin shadow on the empty corridor.

Just when he was about to reach for the elevator button, the door opened. He instinctively retreated, exchanged looks with Audrey inside, and was rooted to the ground by this unexpected situation.

“…How is it?”

She probably realized the reason why he was here, and this short question from her entered his surgent heart. Banagher did not speak up as he merely shook his head. “Is that so…” her muttering was mixed in with a sigh, and she lowered her head slightly as she left the elevator. Banagher did not enter as he remained on this passage devoid of any crowd, and heard the door let out an unexpectedly loud shutting sound.

“I just talked with Flaste. Kwani and Ivan’s “Geara Zulus” can be mobilized. We’ll have 6 mobile suits.”

Audrey spoke as the elevator let out a shutting sound. The sound chased away the heavy atmosphere in the room. “Even so, the enemy outnumbers us 12 to 1.” She continued to explain, her face looking grim. “Thanks for the help.” Banagher’s responding voice became unnatural as a result.

“I’ll continue to call out to the Neo Zeon fleet until the moment we fight. It may be useless, but Captain Otto agreed. He said that since we’re going to point our bows at our comrades, it might be better to do this for the sake of the Garencieres team.”

“It won’t be useless. Your words have power, just like yesterday’s speech, or the words you said to the Zeon Republic army…I can’t move people’s hearts like you do.”

I can’t even turn the Captain around. Banagher felt the helplessness filling his heart as he turned his back on Audrey, who showed a surprised expression. He looked upon the gloves that were covered with ash.

These hands are limited in what they do. Everything began the moment I saved Audrey when she floated in the colony space, and there has to be an end—

“That’s why I want to become your shield. No matter what happens, I’ll bring you to “Laplace Box”. I guess that’s the mission the key of the “Box”…the “Unicorn” and I have.”

“Banagher…”

“If you feel the “Box” has such a value, I hope you can use your words to convey the truth. If it’s something that brings disaster, it’s fine to destroy it. That’s what I can only do—”

“I can’t do it.”

The icy voice pierced from behind, causing him to lose his voice over what he was going to continue with. He closed his mouth, looked over his shoulder, and caught sight of Audrey’s face,

“I can’t do it alone…”

The narrowed eyes that were ostensibly staring at Banagher were moist. Banagher’s voice was stuck in his throat as he wanted to call out to her, and hurriedly looked over; at the same time, Audrey suddenly raised her right hand and grabbed him by the chest.

Her fingernails were poking at the fabric of the pilot suit, and the throbbing came from the fingertips, as the emotions that were ostensibly bottled up to its limit finally gave way. The tremor that resonated with his body was embedded into his body and mind, and he could not help but look back at Audrey’s face.

“If I were alone, I won’t be able to say anything. If nobody trusted me, nobody had the same wavelength as me…someone to support me, I

too would…”

The emerald eyes looked down, and the shoulders with gold embroidery shuddered. There was no actual proof that could support her; if not for the body facilitating the exchange of body warmth supporting each other, there was no way she could stand on her toes like this—*I nearly threw my all onto her,* this understanding came with a sharp pain that pierced through his body, and he suddenly put his hands on Audrey’s. He caught her tilting slender body and lifted her up, using both hands to grab onto her frail body that would break at a single notice.

“…Promise me that you’ll definitely come back. Don’t leave me alone.”

Audrey said, and she did not lift her face buried in Banagher’s chest. As he felt her breath reach him through his pilot suit, he embraced her harder, “It’s a promise.” He answered without hesitation.

“I’m a failure as a Newtype…without you reminding me, I’ld have forgotten that you’re Audrey.”

“It’s good in front of everyone, but only at this moment…”

The little head gave off a sweet fragrance amidst the stench that was filled with gun smoke and ozone from the beams. *You can’t return to the ‘everyone’ you speak of*—he felt the voice of the masked man pass above his hand, trying to take away the warmth from his arms. He reached his hands for Audrey’s face, ostensibly caressing her face as he lifted it.

What he finally saw were tears flowing down from the sealed eyelids hiding the emerald eyes. Banagher embraced Audrey by the shoulders, and let their lips touch. *They’re really soft*— this sensation had melted his nerves, and their body warmth became one as it circulated in them. The bodies became one, ignoring the air on the empty corridor, and released heat with both of them at the center, causing a warm field to spread around them.

Part 4[edit]

(I suppose it can be said we were had. The final destination is “Industrial 7”…the “Magallanica”.)

The laser communication signal sent from within the ship was not stable as the ship they were on was moving at the fastest battle speed. After sending many mails over, he finally managed to make contact with Martha, and the noise was so heavy even the expressions were hard to tell. “Yes.” Alberto Vist answered as he looked at the dimness

behind him.

There was no one else in the communication room of the “General Revil”, and 7 hours passed since the “Banshee” launched. Riddhe Marcenas was practically fused into the darkness several days ago, and at this point, he was in the vast sea of stars several thousand kilometers wide—

(I think it was three years ago when the construction of the “Magallanica” was completed. This self-navigating space colony builder was built to develop the Jupiter Celestial Sphere…I thought Cardeas moved the house there out of his own romantic nostalgia.)

“So he moved the Founder’s cryo when renovating it—I feel this might be a more appropriate way of stating it. Maybe the construction of the “Magallanica” itself was part of the plan to release the “Box”.”

Alberto leaned on the chair, answering Martha who sounded like she was complaining, and started to feel this was a possibility too. The year after the “Magallanica” was completed, the plan to construct the “Unicorn”, the initial phase of the UC plan started. That was the same year when the psycoframe was being experimented for its practicality, and the unwanted test machine—the “Sinanju”, was stolen by the “Sleeves”. In fact, that was a supply disguised as a pirate raid, and though Alberto himself was the one who planned this, Cardeas must have predicted this, set his plan, and decided on a method to hide the “Box” and hand it over.

Anaheim offered its assistance to Neo Zeon and maintained a ‘stability amidst this tense atmosphere’ system for itself to survive; during this time, a secular group in the Federation tried to eradicate Zeonism, and pushed for the space realignment plan while the Zeon Republic was about to be dissolved. Cardeas saw that the Vist Foundation and the Settlement Issues Council had differing standpoints, and used his actions to act as a common disagreement for both parties before waiting to move. This may be how he skillfully blurred his plan.

Create a new conflict and maintain the authority of the Vist Foundation and Anaheim Electronics—this was not his aim; Cardeas had other aims when he thought of opening the “Box”. Alberto was fatigued by this understanding that was ostensibly out of instinct, and felt fear as he felt as if he was thrown into the unknown darkness. He turned his pale face to the communication monitor, (I let someone check through it before!) Martha sounded anxious as she ruffled her blond hair roughly.

(I did attend the completion ceremony, and I witnessed the movement

of the mansion personally. The yard I grew up on actually has the “Laplace Box” in it…can you imagine?)

“I investigated through the intel data of the “Magallanica”. If we’re looking at the construct, there’s no sign of any special works underneath the house. Maybe it’s a disguise job done by the Founder’s direct organization, and the colony association manager may be an accomplice.”

(It’s probably the vice-chairman of the Foundation, Uncle Julst. Looking at his personality, it’s not weird for him to help Cardeas…in this case, we’ll have to look into something else.)

Martha was biting her fingernails, ostensibly thinking of the management team that wanted to take her down, and her face resembled the queen in a fairy tale who was told by the magic mirror she was dying. *Maybe it’s all over.* These passive words appeared in Alberto’s slurred mind. (How’s your situation there?) Upon hearing Martha’s voice, he hurriedly lifted his head.

“We’re late here. The “Banshee” is hurrying there, but the Neo Zeon fleet will reach the “Nahel Argama” first. We’ll look at the developments of the battle, and will probably interfere with their battle. Its location makes it hard to reach “Industrial 7” first.”

(It’s a complete defeat on our part to withdraw all people involved with the Foundation from “Industrial 7”. If anyone’s around, maybe we could have sent it into the “Magallanica” first.)

“What about the Anaheim related people off to repair the colony?”

(They’re not related to the Foundation. Even if we let them handle the media, they’re not people who can approach the “Box”…when will the “General Revil” reach there?)

“Another 8 hours. We can only leave it to the “Banshee” for now.”

If Martha knew the pilot was the eldest son of the Marcenas family, what expression would she have? Alberto suddenly thought of this, and felt surprised by the lack of tentativeness in his heart, and looked at Martha in the eyes as they were contorted due to the noise. On a closer look, her eyes were showing wrinkles that were matching her age, and as he saw this and again felt something end, (It can’t be helped.) Martha muttered, her expression showing a cold glint.

(The “Nahel Argama” and Neo Zeon are getting too close to the “Box”, and we can’t bet on uncertain factors. It looks like we have to use our final option.)

“Final option…?”

(I contacted Chairman Ronan; until the end of this incident, the Foundation will work together with the Settlement Issues Council. I told the Captain through the Senate Council that the “General Revil” is not to approach too close to “Industrial 7”.)

The glint beneath the noise was more chilling than the sudden news. The overly strong noise was not because of reception issues on his side; Alberto realized at this point that Martha was probably on the move too, and gasped when he realized her destination. She, who should be in the Far East base on earth, was headed with Ronan Marcenas to somewhere—

“Are you going to use that…!?”

There was no other guesses to be made, and Alberto inadvertently got up from the console. (So you already knew.) Martha said calmly.

(We must prevent the “Box” from being released. In the worst case, even if we have to destroy the “Box” itself…)

“Destroying the key is one thing, but if you destroy the “Box”…! And the moment to call back the “Banshee” is—”

(The fact that the Foundation and the Federation is working together to eradicate the “Box” will become a whole new basis of coexistence for us.)

The stare looking through the monitor did not move, and Martha spoke with a lecturing tone. “As for the “Banshee”, we can only treat it as a bare minimum sacrifice, though I do feel sorry for the puppet inside.)

She spoke without any trace of emotion, and reclaimed her demonic expression, showing a firm glint amidst the flying noise. *Puppet,* this term overlapped the blue glass-like eyes, and Alberto’s body floated from the chair with nowhere else to head to. The ‘final method’ would not be picky about what it destroys. The “Box”, she; they would all be destroyed from this world. He could touch it if he were a step closer, and he came here for this particular reason—

(Let’s just wait for the “Banshee” first. If it defeats the “Unicorn”, we have a chance to take the “Box” back. Let’s see what it can do.)

The bright red lips throbbed, showing her bewitching smile like usual. Alberto felt the situation was gradually slipping out of control.

Part 5[edit]

The duty crew on the bridge was dressed in heavy normal suits, and they were seated at their consoles; this was a common atmosphere to Mineva Lao Zabi, who spent her infancy in battleships. She passed through the door, immediately faced Otto, who was seated on the Captain's seat, and her body that was dressed in white normal suit just like them moved to the middle of the bridge.

"All hands, use type-A armaments." "All cannons activated, T-minue 1,200 till the first enemy wave reaches our sensor circle." "Minovsky Particles, scattered to battle mode. All mobile suits are ready for launch." In the midst of these voices, "Please come here." Otto said as he pointed to the Commander's seat. The Commander seat in a battleship signified a higher rank than a ship captain. This was not a position that anyone could simply sit on, and Mineva gave a doubtful look back, but Otto did not falter in his stare as he prompted her to sit.

"You have such a privilege. Here."

There was no pretense in his smile, and after saying that, he turned his tense face back at the main screen. "First wave of enemy scattered." Upon hearing the sensor operator's voice, "They're observing our movements and preventing us from using the hyper-mega particle cannon." Otto answered, showing the expression of a commander who was unable to be bothered with Mineva. In contrast, First Officer Liam approached her, "You can attach the helmet to the side of the seat" and said earnestly. Mineva followed her instruction, and looked at the three dimensional display shown on the screen. The time was GMT 0758, and the Neo Zeon fleet markers aligned in front of the shoal space region were ostensibly starting to scatter.

"Now's just a matter of showing the information we can get from the optical sensors. We can't catch sight of each other on the radar, and we'll open the cannons 20 minutes later."

Liam said. Mineva nodded to this female officer who seemed composed, and attached her backpack to the seat. She felt the delayed regret over not bringing a drinking straw.

"Please use this microphone. Your voice will be translated into a light signal and sent out. It's very likely our opponents will carry out optical sensors on our side, so the light signal should be able to reach them. We'll still send the voice and visual over, but do not be too expectant on the effects."

"Then, won't it be difficult for me to prove my identity?"

"That will depends on what you say, Your Highness." Otto interrupted

while the bridge crew was in the middle of a lull. “You have your personal vocal charisma, so please pass it on to your countrymen. Just call out to their hearts just like what you said to us.”

Mineva felt Otto look at her in the eyes as he said this, and Mihiro and the rest of the bridge crew nodded as they looked back from their seats. “I understand.” With an unfaltering expression, she reached her hand for the microphone on the armrest. She clasped onto the microphone that felt exceptionally heavy, irregardless of zero gravity, and looked outside the window at the vast black space.

Calling out to the heart—this was not something she could do as and when she wanted to, and neither was it something she could randomly do so. She once wondered whether she would be betraying her parents’ soulds for advising stubborn soldiers to change their minds, the ones who were praying for Zeon’s revival, those who saw her as a star of revival. Even if she was denying the Side co-prosperity ring Full Frontal talked about with her emotions, there was nothing that could clearly debunk his theory.

However, the words flowed out naturally. *Trusting each other, calling out to each other,* she felt the thoughts forge themselves in her heart, and rise up her throat as a heat source. *There’s no way back now,* Mineva concluded in her heart. She bet on the possibilities formed by this ship that combined two into one, she believed in the power that supported her from behind, this power that was similar to pressure, and at this point, she just needed to think of moving forward.

She sensed that she was being abnormally calm. *Is it because the owner of the warm hands gave my body strength? Her tongue tip licked her lips that were still felt lubricated by the sensation back then, felt heat pass through her body, and the next moment, she emptied her mind and heart. Her lips approached the microphone, and she said out the first line,*

“Greetings to the Neo Zeon fleet in front of us. I am Mineva Lao Zabi.”

Part 6[edit]

(Currently, I am making this broadcast from the Earth Federation’s Londo Bell ship “Nahel Argama”. I am not being detained as a prisoner, and I am not forced to appeal to you. What I want to say next is of my own accord. Please listen to me before we head into battle.)

Audrey was fighting. Banagher felt her voice engulf his heart and nudge it as he flew through the mobile suit deck like an arrow.

The “Unicorn”, standing at the partition that was covered in ash, slowly

expanded in his sights. The machine had undergone what Takuya described as a Full Armor Plan, and showed its breathtaking force once it appeared in front of him. The mechanical arms on both sides were equipped with two Beam Gatling guns, and there was a shield on each side. On the back, there was a similar Gatling gun cum shield sets, with two Hyper Bazookas, fastened on the rear sides of the backpack. The bazookas protruding from the shoulders were about to touch the ceiling, and there were additional mounting frames for extra weapons. Besides the three anti-ship missile launchers equipped on both sides, one could see the red heads of the hand grenades lined in a bunch on left and right as well. There were also another 12 grenades, expanded to a mobile suit's size, equipped on both sides of the calves, and reinforced the impression that it was completely covered with weapons. The heavily equipped had completely changed the silhouette of the machine, and transformed it into an ancient warrior, equipped with bunches of blades and spears—as dignified as a Japanese warrior or samurai.

Amongst them, the biggest feature was the large boosters equipped on the back as a mean to offset the increased mass from the added armaments. These booster rockets, taken from the thrusters of the 94 Base Jabber, were bundled together in a pair through the modified Base Jabber's frame attachments, causing the cylinders to extend from the back, its length matching that of an enemy unit's height. Because of this, the unit could not enter the hangar. As it stood in the middle of the deck, the "Unicorn", nicely put, resembled an Archangel with its wings folded, and bluntly put, was a demon with two extravagantly large tails. If one counted the beam rifled wielded in the hand, the Vulcan guns equipped on the head, the physical bullets, mega-cannons, and missiles cannons, there would be a total of 17. While there would be skepticism as to whether it would be appropriate to call it Full Armor, there was no doubt it had the most firepower for a single mobile suit.

The missile launches were transferred from the "Stark Jegan", and the grenade latches were taken from the stocks of the Jegan-types. *We'll only use whatever we have*, it seemed it was just as Takuya had said. *We actually*…Banagher however swallowed what he wanted to say, and approached Takuya, who was near the cockpit hatch. He was checking the attachments of the additional parts, and the mechanics in Jonas Gibney's group opened the access hatch, checking the machine and the wiring of the optional armaments. Takuya, upon noticing Banagher, wiped the bottom of his nose that was stained in machine oil, "I told you I'll make it in time, right?" He boasted proudly.

“You can fire the optional armaments in your hands and the equipment on your back remotely. There’s no blind spot all around! Leave it to me!”

“I don’t have that many reticules!”

“It can work. This guy has the Intention Automatic System on board, so it can help you control the reticules to a certain extent. Once you sense an enemy’s killing intent, this Lord “Unicorn” will help you aim at it.”

Perhaps he was obsessed with some war story. As he watched Takuya say the term ‘killing intent’ with the expression on his face, Banagher sighed, “Easier said then done…” But while he was in the midst of uttering some bitter words, “This isn’t of complete nonsense.” Another voice rang, and Banagher looked up in response. He saw Aaron Terziff, dressed in Anaheim’s clothes, reach his hand for the cockpit cover and land at where they were.

“I checked through the data of the Destroy Mode activation, and my suspicions are verified. The light given from the psycoframe is the result of the psycowave overload. Your will, your thoughts caused the psycoframe to glow.”

Banagher grabbed onto Aaron’s arm as the latter nearly floated by due to excessive force, and pulled him to the hatch, “My will…?” Aaron looked back at a frowning Banagher, “I guess that’s correct.” and answered with a calm voice.

“A few days ago, I mentioned about the psyco field that stopped “Axis”. The same phenomenon as back then happened in this “Unicorn” machine. It isn’t just simply the psycommu assisting; the psycoframe even has a conversion mechanism, turning the gathered psycowaves into light, which in turn in converted into physical energy. Of course, this initially has no characteristic; nothing can be used for mechanical control theory. The only fact is that the overload of psycowaves became a force that has tangible properties. Do you understand what this is about? You are the power source of the “Unicorn”. Of course, it does need a generator, and the electricity system is running normally. However, the strange power that appears when it transforms into a “Gundam” comes from you. You can say that your head is its heart, and the “Unicorn” is the body that moves using that as the power source. This is no longer something that can be described as a mobile suit, but an expanded 20m tall ‘human’…a giant.”

While he did personally experience it, Banagher found this explanation too hard to accept. He could not hide his startled look, was clearly at a loss of what to do, and turned to Takuya. The latter probably heard the

same time, and nodded with an approving look, “Well, the important thing is,” he folded his arms, and spoke,

“Maintain your vitality. It’ll become energy and allow the “Unicorn” to showcase its monsterous power on the battlefield. You’re not allowed to say that you can’t do anything. Think that you can do it, you will show it to everyone, fight on with your will, and the “Unicorn” will respond to you…that’s how it is, right, Mr Aaron?”

“Unfortunately, I have to agree to this line. In terms of current technology, it’s already a tough thing to carry out tests and set a hypothesis for the phenomenon. It’ll probably take about 10,20 years to anaglyse the data of theis “Unicorn” and compiled it, and that’s if the government will allow people to research on such a dangerous thing.

Aaron answered with a bitter smile as he looked back at the lone horn of the “Unicorn”. *Lingering thoughts*, he repeated what Audrey had once said, and looked at that emotionless face with the facemask. While the thing existing at this place was simply a machine, but if one were to treat it as a ‘human’ 20m tall, a lot of inexplicable things could be explained. Perhaps, just like him, the “Unicorn” was growing, evolving. Though it was buried in the capabilities called the Newtype-Destroy System, it had the mission to guide a true Newtype to where the “Box” was—this giant had both light and darkness, contrasting elements. He was trained by the thoughts and lives of everyone related to him, managed to learn how to control these two elements, and unknowingly found the form he should take…

“Even though the system may not be as complete as that of the “Unicorn”, the similar situation can be applied to all machines equipped with psycoframes. It is an assumption, but if the “Unicorn” and “Kshatriya” are able to work together successful, there’s a possibility that the psyco field can be converted into a weapon.”

Aaron said. “Kshatriya?” Banagher suddenly recovered, and asked.

“When different machines let out a resonance, the psycoframe will use the pilot as a medium and expand the reception range. It’s the same as “Axis Shock”; when two machines’ psycoframes resonance perfectly, they may be able to create a ‘field’ that can push an asteroid, but I guess it is a dream. You can’t call something you can’t control a weapon, so just treat this as reference.”

To Banagher, who had personally experienced the mysterious light field against the black “Unicorn”, the “Banshee”, this was truly a refreshing dream. Aaron removed the smile on his face as he looked at the massive body of the “Kshatriya”, located at the aft.

“What I’m concerned with, is that the pilot’s psycowaves, the source of the phenomenon, will be largely affected by the psychological state. If Lieutenant Marida’s emotions are unstable, she might cause you to be adversely affected.”

Aaron’s last words were obviously hushed down. “No need to worry about that.” But Banagher immediately answered as he avoided Aaron’s stare and looked over at the “Kshatriya”. The machine had lost its right hand, and its right arm was equipped with two Beam Gatling guns. The 4 long barreled guns looking like a prothestic, giving it a different menacing vibe as compared to before. Banagher ostensibly spotted Marida’s pilot suit pass by from its front and enter the cockpit through the hatch in the belly.

Follow your heart. Zinnerman’s voice that rang through the wireless communicator in the chaos the previous day had entered Banagher’s ears. While that had unraveled the curse binding upon her, what exactly was the thing supporting her to fight? Banagher looked around, unconsciously trying to look for Zinnerman, who definitely could not be around, “I’ll be right back”, and left these words to Takuya before leaving the scene.

He moved diagonally across the deck, resounding with Audrey’s voice, and grabbed the cockpit hatch of the “Kshatriya”. “Miss Marida.” Banagher called out, looked up at him, “What is it?” and answered placidly. Banagher however was suddenly at a loss of what to say in response to this question. He looked around the cockpit, where the monitor panels could be changed, and only the insides would be repaired. “Erm, are you alright?” He asked to no avail.

“The Beam Gatling guns were originally developed for the “Kshatriya” use. There is no issues in the synchronization.”

“No, I mean your body. Are you hurting right now…?”

This isn’t the thing to talk about now.Marida seemed to have realized this faster than the speaker; her hand that was proceeding with the system checks stopped, and she again looked up to him. Banagher could not look at her directly, lowered his head “…Sorry.” He muttered as he grasped at the cockpit hatch for no reason at all.

“I met with the Captain, but we didn’t manage to talk properly…”

“I see.”

“He must have been worried about you, Miss Marida. He definitely must be finding it difficult to face you now—”

“Banagher.”

Banagher felt as if he was poked in the forehead in response to his words. “Don’t think of bearing everything by yourself.” Marida stared through the display board at Banagher, who lifted his head, and continued on,

“You’re not alone. You still have me supporting behind.”

“Miss Marida…”

“I do have someone supporting me from behind. I know this even without talking to him.”

Her expression was somewhat eased, and she continued with her system checks again. “You do have someone you want to support, don’t you? Just think of her.” Her answer overlapped with Audrey’s voice that was aired through the wireless, causing Banagher to feel new warmth burning in him. He, Marida, and Audrey were no longer weeds without roots; they were all in a ring of mutual support, bonds. Banagher understood that there were certain things stronger than bloodlines, birth; fetters that could support his footing, and chuckled, answering, “Got it.” He wanted to leave the cockpit as such, but another thought caused him to grab the entrance again.

“Miss Marida, what do you like to eat?”

“Why this out of a sudden?”

She lifted her face nonchalantly and blinked her eyes. “There’s something at least, right?” Banagher asked again, and Marida showed a serious pondering look. “Ice cream…I guess.” This was the first time he heard such a halting tone from her. “There’s a shop that sells nice ones on “Industrial 7”. Banagher then poked his head forward and said this.

“We’ll get out of this situation. We’ll all go there afterwards.”

“Ahh…”

“It’s a promise. I’ll definitely lead you there.”

The troubled expression broke into a smile, “I understand. I’ll be looking forward to it.” Marida answered. *We do have this tomorrow, this future; even if there isn’t one, I want to personally build it*. Banagher decided in his heart. “I’ll see you later then.” He said, and kicked himself away from the cockpit hatch. *We still have a lot of things to do*. He muttered in his heart, and returned to the fully armed “Unicorn”. The white giant was engulfed by Audrey’s voice, echoing through the deck, and was ostensibly waiting for its owner to return.

(It isn't about which side is the correct one. We are incomplete if we take one side. I know the Spacenoids and Earthnoids are existences that are like two sides of a mirror…)

Part 7[edit]

"But even if one side conquers the other, it will not solve the problem. The idea to build high walls and ignore each other is also incorrect. Please do not be afraid of change; after the trials we had since the One Year War, perhaps we have finally found a chance to progress. If you believe in a kind future for humanity, in both Space and Earth, I hope you can let us pass through. As dignified warriors of Zeon, I hope you display the courage to follow your heart."

Mineva spoke till this point, switched off the wireless communicator, and reached a hand to her throat, indicating that she was thirsty. Otto handed her the drinking tube as he looked over at the main screen. There was no movement in the Neo Zeon fleet markers; they were divided in 5 groups of 3 ships, lined in a formation of 3 rows, waiting along the "Nahel Argama" projected path.

"How is it?"

"No response. The Minovsky Particle density is increasing."

The Sensor Operator answered, and it was a reality—that words alone could not change, and could not save. There were some things that could not be understood without fighting for with all their might. Otto sighed and looked at Liam; once they managed to establish understanding through this, he looked at Mineva, only to find her already looking back at him. *You sure?* There was no need to ask verbally, as her eyes told him that it was alright. Otto nodded back, "Prepare for anti-air combat!" And hollered, signifying the start to this battle.

"Mobile suit squadron, proceed forward. The formation will be as notified before. All cannons, begin firing once we enter range."

The recitations and commands echoed at once, and the alarm rang, indicating that they were to prepare for battle. There was still 10 minutes until they made contact, and it was about time for any lucky long-ranged missiles to hit them. Otto stared at the markers on the screen, and grabbed the wireless on the armrest. "This is the Captain to the RX-0. Banagher, do you hear me?" Upon hearing Otto's voice, Mineva, who just put on her helmet, glanced over.

(Yes, I hear you.)

“The enemy wants to get rid of us before we enter the Shoal Space region. Don’t mind about the rear, and just focus on moving forward. We’ll move forward towards the “Unicorn”.”

(Understood.)

“I know I really shouldn’t say such things when I’m asking an ordinary civilian to be the vanguard, but don’t force yourself. You must return alive. It’s meaningless if we simply reach the “Box”.”

After a slight pause, (Understood), a voice returned, and it sounded as if the pilot had been through many battlefields. We can only move forward and pray that he can lead a path for us foolish Oldtypes. He felt bitterness in his mouth, and said, “Good luck.”

Part 8[edit]

(The “Kshatriya” will leave the ship after the RX-0. All units, proceed to the designated Catapult Decks)

(Lieutenant Marida Cruz, Romeo 010 and Juliet 006 will proceed with defense. Lieutenant, please backup the RX-0.)

(Roger that.)

(The Garencieres Team “Geara Zulus”, Golf 001 and 002 are to stay back and protect immediate cover. Shoot down any enemies within a 10km radius.)

(Roger that. They’re our enemies, no need to show any glamor this time.)

(To all the bastards on the gun turrets! Our enemies are rebels unwilling to listen to the Princess. Don’t hold back and show those Federation princes how the Garencieres team fights!)

In the midst of the orderly departure announcements, there was a holler that was not very elegant, to say the least. Marida, Flaste, and the subordinates had already known which forts they were to man in this ship; the voices echoed, and Zinnerman slowly lifted his head. During this time, the voices still echoed through the ship’s broadcast, slowly stirring the heavy atmosphere in the detention room.

(All hands, our immediate priority is to reach the Shoal Space Region. Once we can enter the space wreckage, there is a chance for us to shake off our pursuers. The enemy will probably have difficult organizing a coordinated action.)

It’s the opposite, isn’t it? Zinnerman instinctively decided as his body

shuddered, and looked over at the loudspeaker as Otto's voice boomed.

Captain Tennyson Baguette, commander of the Tennyson fleet, had once taken part in the conflict that caused the Shoal Space Region, the Battle of Loum. That man would make trips down to the Shoal Space Region for inspection when staying at Palau, and create space charts for his own use; if it were him, he would use the Shoal Space Region as a weapon. Once he determined that the enemy would be hard to deal with, he would lure them into the Region and deal them the fatal blow.

Did that Flaste forget? He was at the Captain's Meeting! Zinnerman cussed out in his mind as he listened in on the wireless voice. He did not hear any suspicious tone at all, as Alec, Tomura and the rest of the crew could be heard along with the "Nahel Argama" crew. *What a bunch of fools! Why am I feeling so anxious?* He looked around the room that was covered with mats, and then looked over at the metal door. There was a communication panel on the passage; he thought he had to contact the bridge, and just when he was about to take a step forward, he was surprised that he actually stood up without knowing.

This was a predicament he did not anticipate a few seconds ago. His body, which should have become a hollow, actually moved on its own. He merely felt exasperated by how useless his subordinates were, wanted to lash out at them, and ended up feeling zealous. *What exactly is going on here?* He looked surprised, confused, shaken as he stood blankly, and again turned his stare to the light shining in from the outside. The faint light shining into the detention room could not reach inside, but if he took just a single step, he could reach out for it.

But you managed to get something in return, right?

The phantom standing at the door, the rigid voice echoed clearly in his mind. *That bastard really left it opened and left me alone,* "Seriously…" he let out a hoarse voice, and stared at the white light shining on the corridor. He felt the luminosity seemed to have increased as compared to before, and the light from the fluorescent panels that could be seen everywhere became as dazzling as ever.

Part 9[edit]

Banagher cautiously stepped on the pedal, and before he could take a step forward completely, he felt a resistance pressing on the unit from the back. He summoned the balancer settings on the display board, for the booster rockets equipped on the backpack seemed to have

exerted more torque than he had expected. He chose the automatic adjustment function that would react with the psycommu, and as he was calibrating the values (Hey Micott!?) Takuya's voice rang through the wireless.

He inadvertently lifted his head, looked around, and spotted the normal suit ignoring the frantic outstretched arms of Takuya and Aaron as she leapt from the floor and to the forefront of the "Unicorn"; Haro, nestled in her arms, brought some color on the all-view monitor. He then closed his helmet visor, and opened the cockpit hatch. The air inside flowered out to the mobile suit deck that was in a vacuum; the sound of wind gushing away became distant, and the normal suit that leapt in blocked his sights.

She passed through the hatch, and the momentum carried her past the display board, causing them to end up in each other's arms through a collision-like manner. (Are you okay, Banagher?) Banagher watched Haro slip out from her hands and jump about in the cockpit as it flapped about, and then put his hand on the normal suit Micott was definitely in. Micott Bartsch had her head buried in his chest, and did not have any intention to raise it. Their helmets touched each other, letting out a thud, and he heard a sobbing, frantic breath.

"Don't force yourself just because you're hailed as a Newtype."

This voice was mixed in amongst his breath, and after leaning on each other for just a moment, she quickly lifted her head, "Right, I'm satisfied now. Go on now." and showed a smile through the visor. *I really couldn't do anything for this girl…*he looked back at her moist glittering eyes as he experienced this bitterness, and smiled as he answered, "I'm going now. I'll leave Haro with you." He did not believe that he could give a nice smile, "I'll be waiting with everyone." But Micott answered as such, and carried Haro as she floated through the hatch.

(You're too slow, Newtype!)

Soon after he watched Micott leave, the latter not looking back, there was a holler ringing in the helmet, shooing away all unhappiness. It was Lieutenant Pool in Romeo 010. Banagher, upon seeing the "ReZEL" take a step forward from the hangar, "Understood!" yelled back, closed the hatch, and let the "Unicorn" move forward. He turned around, taking note of the boosters on his back, and just when he was about to advance to the elevator leading to the catapult deck (Don't take all the enemies yourself!) the Lieutenant continued.

(Don't over-commit to them. Leave the remaining machines that had

passed by to us. Don't think too much about them.)

(It's finally our show now. I can't sleep well if we have to use a kid as our shield.)

Ensign Mako in Juliet 006 interjected at the same time. He was one of the backup pilots of the "Nahel Argama", but he did come up with the plan to reassemble the spare parts back into a machine, a "Stark Jegan" that could be deployed in cases of emergency, so he was no ordinary personnel. He recalled their bold expressions, "Understood. Please take care of me." and answered back. Once the elevator had risen, he stepped on the pedal. (Master Banagher.) a respectful voice different from before immediately rang, causing him to be a tad slower in getting on the catapult deck.

(Once the path to "Industrial 7" is opened, we'll force our way into "Magallanica". Please do not force yourself.)

It was Gael. He, who was familiar with the construct of the "Magallanica", was in charge of leading Conroy and the ECOAS members. (Got it. I hope you'll be fine too, Mr Gael.) Banagher answered.

(If the "Box" is really on the "Magallanica", I guess I know where it is. Even if Frontal takes the initiative, there's a chance to snatch it back. Please take care of yourself.)

(Our "Lotos" will be acting as moving cannons on the ship until we reach our destination. We'll meet again on the "Magallanica" again. Squad Leader Daguza managed to preserve your life. Don't ruin it.)

Conroy then followed up. (Path's clear. RX-0, please launch.) At the same time, Mihiro's voice could be heard, "Understood!" and Banagher answered them as he latched the "Unicorn" onto the catapult. Through the opened gate, he saw the catapult deck extended to the bow, moved his sights higher, and saw the space that disappeared into vast eternal darkness.

There was the icy vacuum and the warmth of many supporting him from behind. His body inadvertently shuddered as it stood on the divide, and he recalled the desires he discussed with Audrey, but at this point, it was a luxury. She, who continued to advise the Neo Zeon fleet to retreat, had advanced into the battlefield earlier than he did. As long as they could survive, they could only to talk for as long as he could. They could definitely affirm the warmth of each other, just as they did a while back.

I won't die. I'll definitely come back. Banagher exerted strength in his

abdomen, and stared into the space in front of him.

“Banagher Links, “Unicorn Gundam”, launching!”

The catapult, powered by a linear thrust, started to glide, and the booster rockets on the back lit at the same time, causing a tremor more intense than usual to rock the cockpit. The “Unicorn” exerted the full power of its booster rockets the moment it was launched, dragging a long thruster flare as lit flew into the vacuum. The light became a large membrane that appeared behind the machine, and the lone-horned beast that had gained wings immediately left the mothership.

They had to break through the wall Full Frontal had constructed, and advance to the slumbering land of the “Laplace Box”. The preceding thoughts exploded in a thin flash of light on his forehead, causing Banagher to sense that he was resonating with the psycommu. The psycoframe was activated, the armor plates on each other slid apart, and the machine experienced an uneven torque as it accelerated and rolled to the side. Once it finished, the lone horn on the forehead broke into a V-sign, the dual-eye sensors flashed as it showed itself from the facemask, and the machine that had obtained the appearance of a “Gundam” caused the psycoframe to glow all over its body.

“This can work…!”

The machine moved according to the strength released by his body and mind; the giant become one with him, a human—Banagher raced on with the target being the space where the enemy fleet set camp. The thruster flares resonated with the red fluorescent light, and the accelerating “Unicorn Gundam” glided in space like a comet.

Part 10[edit]

The unit had many cannons protruding from its back, and distanced itself rapidly as it was pushed by the large thruster flare. This scene awakened the memory that was implanted in her before she was born, the words that had become familiar with her; Marida let out a voice that was ostensibly a sigh,

“”Gundam”…”

This word unconditionally awakened the hostility within her, and her sisters, who were nurtured in the icy capsules, had viewed this as an enemy they had to defeat—however, she could no longer feel anything at this point. The only understanding she had of it was that it carried

the familiar soul of Banagher, a vessel with his own thoughts, nothing more, nothing less. Marida found it intriguing, and let the “Kshatriya” move forward from the elevator that had arrived at the top. The moss-green machine closed the binders on its shoulders, trying to get through to the catapult exit. Its massive body, which had excessive specifications, stood on the catapult dangling in vacuum.

Perhaps it’s the ‘light’ I’ve been pursuing. The machine’s large size meant that it was unable to enter the catapult, and as she waited in the machine for the permit to launch, Marida started to dwelve into her thoughts. *The light was born in the artificially-made body, the light had been robbed from the belly; this light has been changing its form all the time, for it has to shine into the unknown tomorrow and future. No matter how much I try to pursue it, I can’t catch up to it no matter how I pursue after it. I understood it for a long time, and because I understood, I looked away, and stopped in the darkness together with those who had lost their light. I keep looking for a flicker of light in others, but I never thought that I can be the light for others.*

It’s different now. I can be the ‘light’. I have a life supporting this body of mine that has nowhere to go, the person who gave me the unique name Marida Cruz, the one who pointed me to the only thing I can follow.

“Follow my heart…is it…?”

She muttered as she put her hands on the ball-shaped control sticks. Had that man, who always hated to be called ‘master’, yet to find where his ‘light’ is? As she thought about this and looked behind, (We have a large number of incoming heat sources!) A tense voice rang through the wireless, causing Marida and the machine to look down in unison.

(20, 30…we’ve many of them approaching fast!)

(Evasive maneuver! Release the dummy meteorites! Don’t hit the launching mobile suits!)

Captain Otto’s voice rang, and the hull of the “Nahel Argama” experienced inertial gravity. Marida felt the hull move vastly to the right, and gathered her thoughts at the approaching killing intent, which had become a wall in front of her. The ones approach in an overly straight line however were not mobile suits, but long ranged missiles or something similar. Once she affirmed this, her body reacted faster than her thoughts, (Launch process aborted.) and she took initiative, saying,

“Marida Cruz, “Kshatriya”, launching!”

The main thrusters hidden in the 4 binders let out thruster flares, and the “Kshatriya” left the catapult deck as it rose in a straight trajectory. It was impossible to have 100% output, but the balance was not too bad, and the damaged parts had lightened the machine, so she could offset the imbalance if she could control it well. As she flew in the G-force pressing down from above, Marida finished her affirmations within 3 seconds, and immediately turned the machine, which had risen by several kilometers, forward. The 4 binders flapped, and once the “Kshatriya” raised the twin barreled Beam Gatling guns on the right arm forward, it turned into a block of thruster flare as it advanced briskly.

There were 32 incoming missiles, and though they were suppressing shots fired with the help of the optical sensors, but several of them were on course to the “Nahel Argama” path. The “Unicorn Gundam” preceding her seemed to have sensed the same killing intent, “Leave them, Banagher!” and Marida, who had realized this, shouted out as she accelerated the “Kshatriya”.

“I’ll handle this! Move forward!”

The mobile suit squadron swarming from behind the missiles was pressuring her field of senses, and it seemed Tennyson’s fleet intended to crush them with its full strength. (Got it! I’ll leave it to you!) Once she actually heard Banagher’s voice, she gathered her consciousness on her field of senses that was synchronizing with the psycommu. 5, 6…she caught the vibration of the missiles flying in a straight line, read their paths, and released her sudden will to fight in the form of a voice.

“Funnels, go!”

The wing-like binders expanded throughout, and the several funnels hidden within flew out. The mini automatic cannons were controlled by the psycommu as they glided out in a zig-zag, and Marida’s consciousness followed them into the void. The incoming missiles loomed, and she could clearly sense the structures of the warheads that had abandoned their propulsion rockets. In an instant, which felt like an eternity, the funnels that were synchronized with the consciousness fired mega particle cannons, and the scorching light exploded within her senses.

This scene immediately became reality as it appeared in Marida’s eyes, agitating her senses. There were more than 10 exploded fireballs expanding in the “Nahel Argama” way, gradually covering the silhouette of the “Unicorn Gundam” that was moving away. The lights signifying the beginning of the battle exploded between the two armies,

lighting the long road to “Industrial 7” like a torch.

Part 11[edit]

The idling sound of the nuclear rocket engine echoed in the ship, and unlike a jet engine, it felt as boring as that of an air-conditioner. Unlike the Dodai Kai that was to be used only in gravity, the Base Jabbers used in space did not have much room.

Alberto grabbed onto the seat's back that was surrounded by consoles, moved his body towards the co-pilot seat, and turned his body with much difficulty in an attempt not to touch the cluster of buttons. After much effort, he finally managed to put his rear into the cramped seat, and just when the backpack of his normal suit was to be fastened to the attachments, (Mr Alberto, will you kindly reconsider?) Captain Maseki’s voice rang through the wireless.

(Our fleet has no order to necessarily interfere with this battle. If anything happens to you, the responsibility will fall upon me.)

The hired Captain only focused on his own issues, and did not say anything else. He followed the instructions given by the Vist Foundation, being mindful of the attitudes of the Senate Council members backing Alberto, and notably, that of the Empress of the Moon that had tamed them all. *I’m still in aunt’s hands now.* Once he again realized that he had never escaped from her clutches, Alberto turned his sights to the pilot seat at his left. He nodded at the pilot, who was looking back uneasily, and prompted the latter to launch, “I should have explained before.” He said into the wireless communicator shamelessly,

“I have no intentions of joining the battle. I just want to use the resonance function of the psycoframe to support the “Banshee”.”

He operated the display monitor on the console and summoned the visual of the wide platform onto the back of the pilot seat. There were 8 large containers carrying spare parts of the “Banshee” at the section originally used for ferrying mobile suits, 4 on top, 4 at the bottom, fastened with cable. Leaving aside the fact that he could have provided support by equipping armaments, it was normal for Maseki and the pilot to find it strange that Alberto was claiming to support by ferrying spare parts over. The “Axis Shock” had proven that unknown characteristics of the psycommu, and these ordinary soldiers definitely would not understand. Even Alberto, who had personally witnessed the creation of the field, did not dare to say how well acquainted he was.

“The spare parts on this Base Jabber have psycoframe on them,

enough to build a Unicorn-unit. The more it can resonate, the more beneficial it will be for the “Banshee”.”

(The Moon observatory has caught sight of battle lights. They have begun. You’ll be entering the battlefield.)

“Just what I want. The more agitated the battlefield is, the easier it is to capture the “Banshee” psycowaves. We’ll be pulled together once I approach.”

The psycofield would expand vastly due to resonance, and if he entered the battlefield that would be filled with it, he might be able to pick up the psycowaves of Ple Twelve—Marida Cruz. While there was no evidence, Alberto had no other deduction to rely on, and got ready for the launch impact. The generator soon got louder, (But the psycoframe has no psycommu function, it’s just an ordinary metal…!) and reverberated together with Maseki’s growl.

“That should have been the case, but the data shows something more. There’s still value in trying this out.)

Alberto did not have confidence that he could only to say such baseless words unabashedly as he cut off the communication on his side, and looked over at the black space on the other side of the opened gate. There was more than 50,000km from this point to the battlefield, the “General Revil” was moving at maximum battle speed, and the Base Jabber, using the catapult force and the booster rockets equipped on both sides, would probably reach the battlefield an hour and a half later than the “Banshee”. The chances of the “Banshee” and “Unicorn” meeting immediately was nearly zero in this space filled with Minovsky particles, amidst the Shoal Space region filled with the debris of many colonies. If successful, he would be able to reach the “Banshee” before the two machines meet.

It was useless to think about what would happen later on, but the one thing he was certain was that he would be unable to interfere if he did not do this. He would lose the chance to get back Marida Cruz forward, and could only watch the unshakeable fact as the ‘final gambit’ activates. As long as there was a reason for him to accept the happenings around him, it was enough; simply put, he wanted to reason to take the first step forward. Once he affirmed this in his heart, he stared at the icy darkness, the darkness that appeared in front of his eyes once he escaped from his aunt’s clutches. Amidst it, there was darkness in the sapphire blue eyes, ostensibly leading into the deep sea—

“I won’t let you be taken by anyone. I must personally…”

As he unwittingly muttered, “We’re launching. There’ll be a massive G-force pressing on us. Please be prepared.” the pilot spoke up, and Alberto again pressed his helmet onto the headrest. The catapult deck leading to the bow lights its guiding lights, and the countdown at the gate pointed to zero. The nuclear engine buzzed till its climax, and the Base Jabber started to move forward.

The Sub-Flight System had two containers on its flat frame, and left the “General Revil” through its own thrust. It then lowered its relative velocity, flying safely as if it were a civilian space shuttle. Once its displacement from the “General Revil” was 3km, the Base Jabber’s assist boosters lit up, and it proceeded with the first acceleration. The G-force bordering on danger pressed upon Alberto’s body, and he was crushed onto the co-pilot before he could groan.

The rubbing vibration echoed within the cockpit, and the blood in the entire body gathered at the back. The hands grabbing at the armrests were unable to move, the saliva flowing out from the side of his lips, climbing onto his trembling cheeks. His darkened vision narrowed hastily, and just as he felt he was about to lose consciousness, he continued to stare at the Moon glowing in front of him.

He was headed to a distant place neither his departed father’s soul nor Martha’s demonic clutches could reach. Without knowing whether he was falling or rising, he raced through the space of eternal night, being alone for the first time.

Part 12[edit]

The Musaka-class cruisers, when viewed from above, had the shape of an acute isosceles triangle, giving the impression that it was a miniature version of the Rewloola –class. Its unique trait was the two heat sink panels installed at the aft, expanding to both port and starboard like the wings. This structure was not just simply to increase the effectiveness of cooling the nuclear engines, but also to increase the mobility.

The Earth Federation force they were facing had a much smaller fighting strength, and there was no need for large ship cannon bombardments, even if it were to be a signal. Their main priority was to maintain a mobile fleet that could allow for quickstrike attacks while sustaining enough operating mobile suit squardrons on their side— This was the fleet building philosophy established in the Second Neo Zeon War, and had continued as a tradiation amongst the so-called “Sleeves”. There was no other battleship in this Neo Zeon fleet other than the flagship, the “Rewloola”. If one included the newly built ships that had entered space within the past three years, the main force, the

Tennyson fleet, was composed only of Musaka-classes and some disguised ships with mobile suits on board, forming a mobile fleet array comprising a total of 15 ships. While a large fleet could not quickly respond, this definition was not suited for the Tennyson fleet. Under the command of the fleet commander Captain Tennyson, all the ship captains had undergone strict training in the shoal space region, were well-versed in maneuvering the massive ships like fighter jets, and were used to coordinate more than a hundred fomrations. This is the effect of the unique operation directive Tennyson exercised, by dividing the fleet into 5 squadrons, and deleglating each commander with a suitable amount of autonomy.

With Tennyson's own squadron as the center, the fleet, divided into groups of 3 ships, scattered apart separately, hoping to form a 2-3 defensive wall against the enemy intending to break through the middle. It had been 30 minutes since the battle began, and though they had to change formations due to being suppressed by the unexpectedly stubborn enemy, Tennyson had confidence that they could settle this before the Shoal Space Region.

Even if the frontline was broken through, the vanguard forces were well-versed in turning back and uniting with the rear group to surround the enemy. At the very least, they would not have to involve the Gajumal fleet harboring Full Frontal's personal escorts. If they were successful, he felt it was not impossible to sink the "Nahel Argama" before Frontal was done with resupply, and move the entire fleet to "Industrial 7".

However—

"Bridges' fleet was broken through…?"

It had been 5 minutes since the order was given to change formations. The squadron tasked as the vanguard had sent out a distress signal, causing Tennyson to inadvertently get up from the commander's seat. At a corner of the flagship "Garom" ordinary bridge, the Operator facing the sensors turned around with a pale look, "That's right." And said.

"Details are unknown due to the space wreckage, but every ship is repeatedly reporting 'Unable to steer'."

"We haven't entered the Shoal Space Region! How can there be a space with so much debris that laser communication is jammed—?"

He roared, but was suddenly unable to do anything. They were

however not of the shoal space, but countless debris floating in the battlefield—the wreckage of mobile suits destroyed in battle. According to the Intel Frontal provided, the “Mock Trojan Horse” only had a few mobile suits on board. Considering the fact that the enemy was still attacking, it was hard to imagine these debris, jamming the communicators, to be from the enemy units.

“Our units got sunk…?”

The captain of the “Goram”, seated at the Captain’s seat beside Tennyson, “Are we going to activate the battle bridge?” asked as he looked back with an observant look. Tennyson would never hide inside the battle bridge even during battle, as a show of confidence that he could survive no matter what battle he was in. He glanced over at the captain, who deliberately asked this despite knowing, and kept the answer to himself as he leaned his body to the window at the front of the bridge. Reflected off the window was the uniformed attire sans the normal suit, as part of the tradition in the Principality army’s era, and he stuck his face on the thick, transparent plastic board.

“Set a formation with the two backup squads in the Shoal Space Region. Send a mobile suit squadron to search for survivors.”

He ignored the recitations as he stared at the distant battlefield. The fires in vacuum were exceptionally cold, and from across the “Geara Zulus” units providing direct cover to the “Garom”, he could see numerous lights of explosions appear and disappear, flickering throughout, with crossing beams etching out burning trails in his sight. There was no refraction of light, and the lights looked exceptionally bright, the distance being probably 1,000km away…or closer. Either way, the light rings of explosions expanded as time passed, proving that the target breaking through the frontlines was headed for them.

“There’s someone being an obstacle there…is it that mobile suit called the “Unicorn”?”

It was just a small enemy, but it oppressed them with the obstacle called willpower, and this feeling—Tennyson had experienced this feeling before, at the battle of the space fortress “A Baoa Qu”, and that was the first time he felt uneasy standing at the windowside without any defense. *Impossible*, he muttered in his heart, and suppressed the impulse to leave the window. *The vanguard is broken through because there’s an enemy’s broadcast of someone impersonating Mineva Zabi, causing the soldiers to be skeptical and confused when attacking. A mere mobile suit can’t possibly cause this much pressure to the Tennyson fleet.* He clenched his hands that were resting on the window, “Carry out all anti-air surveillance seriously!” he barked to cast

aside his inner timidity.

“The enemy’s just a damaged ship. No matter how powerful the mobile suit is, it’s impossible to bre—”

A flash then occurred outside in an instant, and the intense flash filled the entire bridge as the anti-glare filter could not negate it completely. The shockwave expanded from up close, rocking the ship, and the scattered debris pattered around as it hit on the outer walls of the ship. Tennyson immediately covered his eyes, and through the gap between his fingers, he saw a scorching flame and the arm of a “Geara Zulu” being ripped apart. Before he could realize that the covering mo ile suit was shot down, “Incoming heat source, fast approaching!” The Communiator Operator’s voice sounded like a shriek as the incoming alarm rang throughout the bridge.

“Too slow! What’s the mobile suit squads doing!?”

He hollered without any restrain, and again looked outside the window. The enemy passed through the allied machines that should have been there, shooting down the cover units from outside the sensor range — *where is it* ? He looked towards the explosion lights that were approaching, and his expression reflected off the window turned pale due to fear. In a corner of his eye, there was a red light different from the lights of explosion.

A phosphorus red light, different from an explosion or a thruster flare, darted through space like a mirage and approached them. “It’s too fast…!” The Operator groaned, “It’s coming!” another voice overpowered it, and an unprecedentedly powerful shockwave rocked the “Goram” bridge.

It felt as if they were crushed in a large beast’s jaw, and then shaken away with brute force. Tennyson was sent flying away, and he crashed into the ceiling before he could protect himself. The lights in the bridge had turned red, flickering about, and the Steering Operator was tossed away from his seat, bouncing through the bridge like a ball. Tennyson wanted to ask for a damage report, but was unable to breathe, and as he, in his confusion, grabbed onto the helm , the red glowing light passed through the port of the ship, and entered his eyes.

“A “Gundam”…?”

Shrouded in the red phosphorous light, the white color of the armor and the unique silhouette of the machine was unmistakeable. It instantly vanished, and a newly created explosion shook the bridge. “A direct hi to the engine room! It’s a direct hit!” The Communication

Operator's voice rang in Tennyson's ears.

(There's a large breach in the thruster nozzle! It looks like it was chewed through! What is that thing!?)

(The "Charne" at the back seemed to have gotten hit too! It's breaking off course!)

(It's closing in! We're about to crash!)

"Evade! Turn using the sub thrusters! Mobile suit squadrons are to give pursuit!"

The Captain grabbed onto the Captain's seat, and upon hearing the reports coming in fromt everywhere, hollered out. However, his instructions were refuted by the Communications Operator, "The heat sink panels are destroyed! We can't increase the engine's output!" The Captain's face appeared in the flickering red lights,and he was at a loss of what to say.

"The covering mobile suit squadrons have all been destroyed. Recall the single ship at the front back to defend."

"The "Charne" sent a signal. It can't move."

The Operator's voice sounded like a final blow. There was once a Federation unit that passed through the intercrossing fires of "A Baoa Qu", opening a large hole in the Zeon's defense fleet; the machine in front of his eyes had inherited that machine's design. "The White Devil…?" Tennyson groaned as he leaned his body, floating weakly in zero gravity, onto the window. "Incoming enemy units from behind!" The Operator's shout rang, and the Captain did not look back at Tennyson as he gave the order, "All hands, put on your normal suits!" Immediately afterwards, a collision impact passed through from the aft to the stern, and the unexpected term of 'defeat' was etched in Tennyson's body and mind.

The "Goram" nozzles at the aft were burning, wrecked, and the "Charne" that crashed into them. The two ships crashed together dully, like they were being docked, probably because it was because their relative velocities were almost identical. The "Unicorn Gundam" turned its back on them, and attacked the remaining Musaka-class ship forming the core team. The white machine zig-zagged with the help of its booster rockets, did not give the enemy the time to fire a perimeter of anti-air shots, and got to the belly of the Musaka-class. Banagher's muscles twitched as he felt the G-force pressing on him everywhere, caught sight of the killing intent in front of him, and stared at the CG-corrected visual on the all-view monitor.

Two “GAZA-D” squadrons fired their large beam cannons, dubbed the Knuckle Busters, and transformed into mobile armor form before approaching. The hooks, which were the legs in mobile suit form, reached out like a raptor, and just before two units, resembling that of a bug, could scatter, Banagher fired the Hyper Bazookas on the shoulders. The physical shots were fired in anticipation of each unit’s trajectory, and the scattered metal balls, amounting in hundreds, rained down on where the “Gaza Ds” were. The two units were struck by the balls, crashing in at 10 times the sound of sound, and spun out of control. Once that happened however, Banagher saw a “Geara Zulu” squadron fly over to fill the opening the previous two machines left behind.

“Back down!”

The Beam Gatling guns in his arms quickly spun around, and let out 4 trails of rapid-fire beams. Banagher ceased the opportunity shown when the 3 “Geara Dogas” showed fear, and immediately closed in on the Musaka-class ship. The moss-green ship evaded upon seeing the abnormality of the ships in front, but once they passed each other, Banagher threw the remaining half of his grenades out. These mobile-suit grenades did not activate immediately, but floated around the Musaka-class, and once they grazed the directional nozzles on the side, they exploded.

The heat from the thrusters, which were activated in an attempt to change directions, ignited the grenades. The thrusters were knocked aside by the explosion, and the other thrusters, which were lit to stabilize the hull, triggered another set of grenades, causing the stabilizing nozzles on both sides to be engulfed in the lights of the explosion. The beam Magnum fired then grazed through the aft, and the heat and scattered particles melted the nozzles of the main thrusters. The Musaka-class became a large metal scrap that could not move, despite its turbines and weapons being unaffected.

Once the main thrusters were destroyed, the spaceships would share the fate of a rudderless naval ship. Banagher glanced down at the floating ship, affirmed there was no need to sink it, and left the Musaka-class, passing through the shots from the covering units.

2 “Geara Dogas” were pursuing, firing their beam machine guns, and there were beams raining from top and bottom. Some missiles then came a tad little, activating the approach sensors, and the lights of explosions engulfed the “Unicorn Gundam”. Banagher was shaken by the club-like impacts slamming upon him as he continued to look around, and caught sight of new enemies closing in from top and

bottom. The “Geara Zulus” disembarked from the flat SFS, and fired its beam machine gun as it approached from below. A black machine resembling a SFS turned its bow towards its back, and once its wing-like thruster unit was folded up, it transformed into a mobile suit wielding a large beam rifle; the expanded window showed a matching data, indicating it was the AMX-008 “Ga-Zowmnn”.

Above him was another group of “Geara Zulu”, replacing the “Ga Zowmnn”, approaching fast. There were 7 machines pursuing from 3 directions, including the 3 “Geara Dogas” chasing from behind. Banagher, whose senses were synchronized with the psycommu, felt their ‘presences’, and made an emergency brake by flaring the stabilizing burners on its body, negating the momentum brought forth by the booster rockets, and decelerated while seemingly moving backwards. The “Unicorn Gundam” changed into the middle of the perimeter formed by the 7 enemy units, and fired all the weapons it was equipped with, causing a rain of beams and physical bullets to scatter around like a storm.

The six Beam Gatling guns on its arms and back spun and fired at the same time, the two Hyper Bazookas pointed upwards fired their 380mm cannons, and the anti-ship missiles littered on the bazookas were shot out afterwards. The missiles carried trails of gas and hit the “Ga Zowmnn” directly, and once he felt felt the machine above get knocked aside above, Banagher squeezed onto the trigger, trying to scatter away any incoming pressure. The “Unicorn Gundam” raised its arms, let loose trails of Beam Gatling guns, and spun around, punching holes in the abdomens of the “Geara Dogas” and ripping their limbs off. The “Ga Zowmnn” took direct hits from the mega particles, and exploded; as the explosion light expanded around, the machines that were fired upon were engulfed by the white hot lights, and the psycoframe let out bewitching lights as it sensed the ‘presences’ released by the enemies.

“That’s 19 of them…!”

He let out these words with bated breath, and again stepped on the pedal. The “Unicorn Gundam” swpt aside the lingering ‘presences’ that disappeared amidst the explosions, and once it moved forward again, a pressure struck Banagher from behind. He instinctively felt danger, and as the intention automatic system reacted, a mega particle cannon, completely different from a mobile suit portable weapon, grazed past, the shockwave hitting the machine as it rolled to the side. The Musaka-class was unable to move, but as it still had its weapons, it continued to bombard. Banagher endured the G-force bearing on his body as he dodged the incoming shots side to side, wanting to let the

machine move forward as he glided in space.

This was not a bad decision. The Musaka-class intended to shoot down the “Gundam”, which was flying away, as it fired the cannons attached to it. However, the third cannon at the aft was shot down at the base before it could reload. A beam came from a completely different direction, shooting the turret down along with the capacitor at the base. The Musaka-class veered further off course, shaken by the explosions right at the back of the bridge construct. There were many small objects above it, so small even the motion sensors could not pick up, and these things flew back to their main machine far away—the “Kshatriya”.

“I won’t let anyone shoot the “Gundam” down.”

The dozen funnels or so hid within the binders to recharge, and Marida’s “Kshatriya” followed the “Unicorn Gundam”. Even after breaking through the core squadron, the two squadrons at the back remained unscathed, and once Marida sensed the incoming missiles, released the funnels that were just recharged. The psycommu devices danced and swirled about, letting out crossing beams, triggering 2, 3 explosion rings, and caused the countless scorching debris to scatter towards the Shoal Space region.

Part 13[edit]

The space debris, which had triggered the motion sensors approximately 10 minutes ago, increased in numbers, and had become a meteorain passing by at high speeds as they appeared on the all-view monitor. There were melted bits of metal even after dodging, grazing the Base Jabbers that was shaking and moving behind. (What’s going on…!) Watts Stepney’s voice echoed with the tremors of the stabilizing burners that was activated from time to time, entering the ears of Nigel Garrett, who was seated in the “Jesta”.

(Even if this is the Shoal Space Region, there’s too many of these things.)

(We haven’t reached there yet. This is debris that’s just created.”

Daryl McGuinness said, and at the same time, a detailed visual of a space wreckage reached them. Though Nigel had some idea of it, he still let out a gasp.€ The CG corrected visual showed the mechanical arm of a mobile suit—and one could clearly tell from that unique sleeve design that it belonged to a “Sleeve” machine. The mechanical arm was probably separated from an exploded machine, and there were many unknown bits floating around, flying past at bullet speed.

It had been 9 hours since they were tasked to head off to the Shoal Space region midway through their journey to the “L1 Langrange Point”. The 3 “Jestas” had their own Base Jabbers, and the wreckage, which they had not seen for quite a while, was actually part of the debris. It was true it was not the Shoal Space region yet, and the lights of battle flashing at their desination were seemingly helping the Shoal Space Region expand, creating new debris. (How many units are attacking…) Nigel however ignored Watts’ murmuer as he stared at the ongoing battle far away. He had noticed beams and explosions 30 minutes ago, and these continued to happen without pause; however, the scale of this was not too large. These lights were focused at a particular area however, and it seemed they were headed to the Shoal Space Region; if it were two large forces fighting, one could see that the size of the battlefield would be larger.

“The “Nahel Argama”…and the “Unicorn”?”

Looking at the scenario, there was no other guesses. The Londo Bell ship—the rebel ship that was to be arrested under the behest of the army, was fighting alone against the “Sleeves” fleet, headed to the Shoal Space region. Nigel frowned at this unexpected development, but was troubled as he sensed this was not unexpected. (Leader, our Base Jabber fuel’s at their limit.) Daryl’s voice rang, yet it seemed so distant.

(We have to turn here if we want to head towards the rendezvous point with the “General Revil”. We’ll end up in the battlefield at this rate.)

It had been 2 hours since the Base Jabber abandoned the boosters with the depleted fuel and advanced forward only with its thrusters. Even if they were to turn here, the thrusters would have been depleted by the time they rendezvous with the “General Revil”, and the “Jesta” might have to climb back on board through its own hands. “That’s true…” Nigel answered as he continued to stare at the flickering lights of battle that was luring him. He knew, common sense-wise, that he should turn back, but he just could not make the decision. There seemed to be an unknown ‘presence’ amidst the lights of battle. Perhaps he was tired?

This was probably the case. A little nap on the Base Jabber would be insufficient in removing the fatigue of wearing a normal suit for an entire day. It would be better to wait for Riddhe’s “Banshee” and analyse the situation. Nigel opened the helmet visor, and rubbed his eyes littered with eyewax, (What’s this voice?) but lifted his eyelids once he heard Watts.

He increased the volume of the wireless communicator and paid close

attention. There seemed to be someone's voice ringing amidst the static, causing his heart to jump. (It's a girl's voice, she's saying something.) Daryl's voice rang, and upon hearing this, Nigel adjusted the wireless communicator frequency.

(…There is no meaning in fighting. This "Nahel Argama" is no longer a Federation or Zeon ship. Our aim is simply to prevent the "Laplace Box" from being misused.)

He could finally hear a girl's voice, (What's that Box anyway!?) but Watts' outburst overpowered it. "Shut up!" Nigel hissed back as he lisened in on the voice in the communicator, coming from the battlefield.

(The fighting that had occurred during this past month revolved around the "Laplace Box". People said it has the power to topple the Federation, and perhaps it may bring a new light to Neo Zeon. But we do not live in a world where people can carry out unconscionable conduct. If we do not find a path where people on both Space and Earth can coexist, we will only renact the One Year War. As a member inheriting the blood of the Zabi family, I have a duty to prevent this from happening.)

(A heir to the Zabi family. That's…)

Daryl's gasp rang through the wireless, but Nigel focused on the name Mineva Zabi in his heart, and listned in onto this fading voice with his entire body.

(We are all as One, including the people hearing this broadcast. We, as one humanity, have the possibility of expanding throughout this space, but are confined within the cramped Earth Celestial Sphere. To anyone, no matter who you are, please help us, let us through, so that the light of possibilities would not disappear. We do not have time to waste on this battle. We are doing this for everyone to survive…)

The noise got worse, and the voice, which seeminglybelonged to the girl called Mineva, faded quickly. Nigel could not hear any of the voice no matter how he adjusted the frequency, lowered the volume of the wireless communicator which was left only with noise. He let out a sigh of breath accumulated within him, and looked into space. He felt goosebumps all over his body, and his heart continued to throb violently. *What's going on?* He did not know how to view this situation, and the three "Jestas" were practically in a fog as silence descended upon them. (What's going on?) Finally, Daryl asked,

(The "Nahel Argama", with Mineva Zabi on board, is actually fighting a

Neo Zeon fleet…)

“I don’t know. It doesn’t look like a Disruption Operation…looks like we still have lots of things we don’t know about.”

All contact with the “Nahel Argama” was lost since the moment it latched on with the disguised Neo Zeon ship. If it had Mineva on board…Nigel tried to think, but could only conclude that there was insufficient information, and turned his stare back to the flares of battle at their destination. The lights seemed to be beckoning for him—*is it because of the voice that seems to belong to Mineva?* Just as he was pondering for no real reason, (Hey, Watts!?) Daryl’s outcry rang, and a thruster flare came from a unit behind Nigel.

(Stop yapping and go save them. We’re already here now. There’s no reason for us to do nothing, right?)

Watts’ “Jesta Cannon” left the Base Jabber, and its thick body, padded with extra armor, leapt forward. But though this man was headstrong and reckless, Nigel felt from his actions that there was an urge wanting Nigel himself to make a decision, and he swallowed his urge to stop the other man. *That guy noticed it too?* As he pondered, Daryl’s “Jesta” moved along Nigel’s, (Hold it!) And there was a holler on the wireless.

(We don’t know what’s going on. What are you trying to do?)

(A Federation ship’s fighting with a Neo Zeon fleet. There’s only one obvious thing we can do!)

Nigel ostensibly saw Daryl’s speechless expression, and was amused by Watts’ overly simplistic logic, “This seems reasonable too.” He said. (Leader…!) Daryl answered back, his tone filled with criticism.

(There’s a girl pleading for help. What kind of men are we to ignore her?)

The “Jesta Cannon” lit its thrusters and started to accelerate, as if there was no need for another reason. Watts too certainly understood how dangerous it would be to interfere without being certain of the situation, but Nigel believed Watts too was being called, and murmured the one thing he should do in this situation. He felt the bloodrush in his mind fade away, and let out a wry look. (Seriously… what do we do?) Daryl let out a sigh, and as Nigel looked over at his unit, he affirmed that the former had felt the same, and held onto the control stick.

“No choice now. We’ll follow him.”

The “Jesta” thrusters were still intact, and it was very easy to reach the

battlefield at such a short distance. Even if the fuel was depleted, they could request the “Nahel Argama” to take them in. With this shred of minimal rationality left, Nigel detached his unit from the Base Jabber. “Go back to the “General Revil” first. I’ll leave the reporting to you.” He notified the pilots on the Base Jabbers, and stepped on the pedal without waiting for their answers.

The “Jestas” floated up from the Base Jabbers, and started to accelerate with the help of the lit main thrusters. Daryl’s machine followed behind, and the two machines flew past the incoming debris to catch up to Watts’ machine, which had gone on first. *Right, we came all the way here. There’s no reason for us to turn back without doing anything. The “Unicorn”, Mineva, the “Laplace Box”. We’ve been dragged along by these things, so at least we have to see the truth for ourselves.* Nigel readied his beam rifle to a position where he could fire at will, and stared at the battlefield with many lingering ‘presences’. The three units let out long tails of thruster flares, ostensibly shaking off the despondence from being fastened on the Base Jabbers, and passed through the space region filled with debris.

Part 14[edit]

(…40% of the entire force has been neutralized, and the entire fleet is retreating back to the Shoal Space region. Our Gajumal force will open the last line of defense here, so please hurry to “Industrial 7” as soon as possibly, Captain. The “Mock Trojan Horse” is closing in.)

Commander Gajumal’s expectant face appeared on the communication panel 10 inches wide, and it was this aspect that was unforgivable. *They look as if they was a member of a stable world, but his viewpoint was hindered by his rigid imagination, and when there’s something unexpected, they either exclaim that it’s impossible, will not face it, or start shifting blame, looking all loyal and courageous, saying that they did all they can do. These foolish adults are all like this, always thinking that they just need to maintain their pride even if the world’s destroyed.*

It had been 5 hours since they were taken in by the flagship of the Gajumal fleet, the “Guskor”. The emergency repairs on the “Rozen Zulu”, which had lost an arm, was completed, and Frontal’s squad was ready to be deployed, but this was not the issue they were facing. Angelo Sauper was at a corner of the mobile suit deck, facing the communication panel on the catwalk wall in the maintenance side, looking around at the faces of the subordinates standing to the side.

The two of them were pilots from the escort squad, in their early 20s. Lieutenant Rakar and Ensign Reil remained still as they continued to

stare at their superior officer, who was ready to die, with dignity and respect. The pilots at the shackles too looked solemn as they stared at the monitor, with no intention to call out the commander for wasting fighting strength due to his little understanding. *Why? Why isn't anyone angry? It's because of people like Garumal that our country's destroyed. We're the ones suffering from their indecisiveness and debts.*

"There's only one empty vessel, and you mess it up!"

The dissatisfaction exploded from Angelo's mouth in the form of a roar, and he felt Rakar and everyone else gasp. Garumal did not seem to notice the fact that a lower-ranked personnel lashed out at him, and was taken back. Angelo glared at their faces and took a step closer to the monitor.

"The enemy only has a "Gundam" as its main fighting force! Concentrate your attacks on it! It's because you're still gathering your fleet obediently—!"

"I'll sortie this time, Commander Garumal."

Someone suddenly interjected, and interrupted Angelo's words with a nonchalant tone. The latter turned behind, and saw a masked face from beyond the shoulders of his subordinates. He did not know where he could vent his frustrations on (But Captain, you…) Garumal gave a skeptical voice, "I want to extinguish the flames now." Full Frontal said as he looked over.

"I'll bring the escort squad along. The deployed forces are to take independent action. Please notify the frontlines."

(Yes! Good luck!)

Garumal said as he saluted, showing a look Angelo felt belonged to those irrespsonsible adults. *They started a war, seeking death, and turned the world upside down; they left their debts for us to pay, and they bear responsibility, thinking that it's martyrdom for the greater good. This is the one thing I really can't stand about them. We must at least make them embarrassed over their own imcompetence. How else are they going to pay this debt!* Angelo pursued after the red silhouette which turned to leave, and left the wall of escort squad members, "Captain…!" he protested, but as Frontal crossed the handrail of the catwalk, "I told you before", he said as he turned his masked face aside slightly.

"The pilot of the "Unicorn Gundam" is a Newtype, and a power Newtype will affect the people around him. It is better to assume the

current “Mock Trojan Horse” as an actual Newtype Corp.”

The white glove grabbed onto the handrail, and the tall, hulking figure floated in the mobile suit deck. The fiery red armor of the “Sinanju”, outfitted with its equipment, looked dazzling behind Frontal’s lush blond hair that was floating about.

“Also, they do have Lieutenant Marida’s “Kshatriya”. Numbers alone won’t be able to beat Newtypes. The fleet will be broken through soon.”

The words indicated that he knew this would happen, and this caused Angelo to relax his shoulders and shake off his unhappiness. *This strong directiveness, merciless penetration for our objective, will ultimately guide us to our final victory, bring order to the world in chaos, and purify the blood-stained bedsheet.*

We don’t need a cause, personal reputations and deignity. As long as we are with this mask, who will never back down when pitted against the world, who has the power to surpass humanity— “It’s your turn now, Angelo.” Angelo embraced Frontal’s words, which had been imposed on him.

“Show me the true value of the “Rozen Zulu”. Hurry with the preparations.”

“Yes! I’ll definitely dispatch the “Unicorn Gundam” for you. I’m betting on your life.”

My life’s insufficient to wager on; the term ‘determination’ only comes into effect when betting on the most valuable things in this world. “I’m looking forward to it.” Frontal answered and left the handrail, whilst Angelo stood still and watched him leave.

“Don’t get devoured by him. It’ll be a lonely sight without that rose every day.”

The masked face said from beyond the shoulder, causing Angelo to hallucinate seeing the blue eyes under the mask. *I won’t get swallowed by it. My life, my body are already a part of you.* “Yes…!” Angelo brought his heels together and swallowed his surging emotions as he watched Frontal leave. Frontal had completely excluded Angelo from his thoughts, and once the latter watched him leave and enter the “Sinanju” cockpit, Angelo looked back at the massive “Rozen Zulu” at the hangar beside him.

The machine had lost its right hand, and was directly fitted with a shield; the Musaka-class mobile suit deck was too narrow for it. The

shield included mega particle diffusion cannons, and also a 'unique equipment' against the "Unicorn" on the backpack. Angelo stared at the massiveness that showed all these aspects, and felt that he, at this point, would not lose even if he were to take on the entire world. He felt the majestic appearance fitted him, and he curled his lips aupwards. The shield fitted on the right hand directly could fire an INCOM claw, just like the remaining left hand, and fire in all directions through the scattered mega particle cannons. *I don't care if the enemy's a Newtype or something else, it's going to be effortless stopping a single unit. And with this 'unique equipment', I'll definitely bury the "Unicorn" for good this time, together with that arrogant pilot who had the talent the Captain recognized, but irresponsibily forsaken us with such pretty words.*

"Banagher Links. It'll be over this time…!"

I'm going to shred whatever small possibility there is and prove to the Captain that he's wrong. Angelo put on his helmet and kicked himself off the handrail of the catwalk. The raised shoulder armor was stacked up like rose petals, and the "Rozen Zulu" silently awaited the arrival of its owner.

Part 15[edit]

He kept thinking of moving forward, but his thoughts were forced back by the hard pressure closing in from the front. The pressure was then transformed into physical projectiles at the next instant, the motion sensor picking them up, and in less than half a second, he reached the point of contact.

It happened after he entered the Shoal Spaceregio and broke past the 4th fleet. Banagher pulled the control stick before the siren rang, and fired the remaining anti-ship missiles. He saw them explode at close range, triggering explosions from the trail of missiles. Another wave of pressure came in a similar trajectory however before the expanding rings of explosions became blueish-white gas, and a second volley of missiles came in two groups. His senses have picked up on the origin of the killing intent, and the "Unicorn Gundam" received the signal as its thrusters flared, practically flying in a perpendicular path.

The missiles loaded on the machine let out gaseous trails, and the enemy units, resembling missiles, closed in quickly. Banagher saw the expanded window indicate AMX-102 "Zssa" for an instant, detached the Hyper Bazookas on the shoulders, and readied them on the hands of the "Unicorn Gundam". The missile launchers embedded on the barrel turned 90 degrees, and once they were pointed in the same direction as the muzzles, the two bazooks and missiles were fired in

unison. The bazooka shots had a faster initial velocity than the missiles as they exploded on the enemy's path, released hundreds of metal balls. Afterwards, the slower anti-ship missiles advanced in on the slowed "Zssas".

One of them took a direct hit, was blown to bits, and became a fireball; at that instant, the remaining unit abandoned the large booster it was carrying on its back, and once the booster was buried amidst the countless metal balls, the "Zssa" showed its actual mobile suit form, its short body and stout limbs resemble a miniature puppet. It did not look suited for space combat, fired the hidden mini missiles hidden in its legs, drew its beam saber, and charged over. Banagher was highly startled by the reckless pilot who did not care about the consequences or the unit's specificiations, and then looked frustrated.

"You started it…!"

Banagher dodged the incoming beam saber slash, and once they crossed each other, delivered a kick to its head. He then fired the head Vulcan guns at the "Zssa", still persistent on attack, and heard a creaking sound from the machine at the same time.The "Zssa" was thoroughly perforated by the 60mm bullets, and the winds from the explosion blew the "Unicorn Gundam" aside, returning it to its original trajectory when it stopped. The air pockets pressing on the lower body shrank as the G-force was lowered, and the bloodrush to the head gradually faded away. However, the uneasy feeling of the muscles being ripped lingered on the flesh.

"That's the 25th…26th?"

Banagher's shoulders were humping as he panted, as he opened his helmet visor to wipe the sweat off his head. His headache lingered, and there was a numbing pain on his compressed lower body. He fired the missile launchers to purge the bolts, and as he checked the remaining 30% of his missiles, the machine turned about, catching sight of the surroundings. He could only see the countless space debris of different sizes, floating about, yet the lights from "Industrial 7" could not be seen. He could see fireballs flashing behind him. Were they from the units destroyed by the "Kshatriya"?

"I'm too far from Miss Marida. The "Nahel Argama"…"

It had been a long while since he broke contact with the "Nahel Argama' laser communication. He summoned the rear surveillance visuals on the expanded window at the back, and reached his hand for the drinking tube. At that moment, a shrill alarm rang, and he instinctively closed his helments.

3 “Geara Zulus” were riding on “Ga Zowmnns”, approaching from above. Banagher panicked, lamenting that he did not notice their presences, and the 3 units scattered, while the small missiles from the “Ga Zowmnn” exploded arolund the “Unicorn Gundam”. Banagher managed escape from the vortexs of explosion lights in the nick of time, and fired the remaining 360mm shot from the bazooka in his right hand. The explosion expanded into a sphere, and the scattered metal balls dealt with a “Ga Zowmnn”. Banagher escaped the “Geara Zulu” Strum Faust, and as it intended to fight back with its Beam Gatling Gun, there were red words in a corner of his eyes, and a different siren hailed, ringing in Banagher’s eyes.

The pilot’s lifesign monitor flickered with a red light below the flashing NT-D signal. The time limit was up—*at this moment!* “Hold it! I can still fight!” The exclaimation however was overpowered by the trembling sounds of the machine’s armor sliding back, and at that moment, the enemy’s shots were gathered on the “Unicorn”, which had lost the appearance of the “Gundam”. The exploding Strum Faust flashed in front of the all-view monitor, and the scattered particles from the grazing beams hit the body. Banagher evaded subconsciously as he hollered,

“Don’t change back now! There’re still enemies!”

There was suddenly a sharp pain deep within his nostrils, causing the remaining voice to be stuck in his throat. Banagher felt a warm feeling scatter from the center of his face, spotted the blood blobs leaking from his nostrils, and hurriedly opened his helmet visor. He pushed aside the nose bleed which was floating in the form of bubbles, and wiped away with the back of his glove as he fired the beam Gatling gun at the incoming enemy. His movements were obviously dulled, and with only his thoughts running first, the machine was unable to catch up with the body.

“Because of this…!”

He would not be able to return to Audrey, he would not be able to lead Marida to the ice cream shop; He was at his limit. Banagher shook aside the words appearing in his mind, and focused on the enemies coming in three directions. He threw the Hyper Bazooka at the enemy coming from the bottom, and reached for the beam saber. *It’s too slow. I won’t be able to make it.* The “Geara Zulu” sliced the bazooka apart, and reached the front of the “Unicorn” through the thrust of the “Ga Zowmnn”. The moment Banagher’s widened eyes started at its monoeye, another beam shot in from another direction, and the “Geara Zulu”, shot through, exploded up close.

“What…?”

The machine, shaken by the shockwaves, repositioned itself, and scanned around. 3 thruster flares could be seen from afar, and another beam came flying in. Banagher saw the incoming enemy units scatter like they were blown apart, and a “Ga Zowmnn”, transformed into mobile suit form, explode in a chain of explosions, probably triggered from grenade explosions. This light shone upon the neighboring “Geara Zulu” and the interfering 3 mobile suits, the deep blue humanoid forms, each equipped with goggles on their main cameras, appeared in Banagher’s sights.

“A Federation new model? From where?”

Banagher did not think there would be reinforcements at this moment, and pointed his reticule at the three units. (Do you hear us? “Unicorn” pilot?) At this moment, there was a voice mixed with the noise, and he blinked, not knowing what happened.

(We’re the Tri-Stars of the Londo Bell supporting you. Retreat for the moment while the system cools off.)

Once these words were conveyed, the unit in the front moved above the “Unicorn”, and fired a screen of shots at a nearby “Geara Zulu”. The second deals a fatal blow to the “Ga Zowmnn”, and the light from the explosion caused the 3rd unit to float in the air. This 3rd unit was similar to the other two, but was a heavy armor version, with added armor and two cannons; it fired its large rifle, and two beams came from its dual barrel. The “Ga Zowmnn” in mobile armor form was knocked aside, and passed below Banagher as it decelerated rapidly.

“Londo Bell’s, Tri-Stars…?”

Banagher sensed that he met them before, but he did not know when; all he could remember was that they were similar machines to the ones he spotted on the “Ra Cailum”. The pilots seemed to be very skilled, and in the meantime, Banagher focused on grasping the locations of all the units around. He watched the 3 machines move in sync as he aimed at the enemy units. 4 lines of fire flashed about, turning the incoming miniature missiles into new spheres of explosions.

Part 16[edit]

Once the “Ga Zowmnn” fired all its missiles, it got shot down by the “Jesta Cannon”, and exploded. Nigel fired his own beam rifle as well, hitting a “Geara Zulu” in the abdomen, and once he sensed the looming presence following up, he glanced at the “Unicorn” near his

feet on the all-view monitor.

The white machine with the lone horn retreated from the defense line, probably sensing that there was reinforcement. “Listen to us!” Nigel called out as he pushed the “Jesta” thrusters to the maximum output.

“Our “Jestas” are originally designed to back up the “Unicorn”. We’ll take over and deal with the enemies while you take a bre—”

He endured the G force pressing on his eyeballs, and drew the beam saber hidden in the arm. The “Geara Zulu” closing in on the “Unicorn” path too drew a beam hook, and once their beam blades clashed, the beam particles slice through the abdomen.

“—ath.

Nigel finished the rest of the line with his back against the “Geara Zulu”, exploded into a fireball once its generator was ignited. (But…!) the pilot’s voice could be heard, (How dare you say ‘what’ if you’re a soldier!?) but Watts’ roar overpowered it, and Watts proceeded to close in on the enemy ranks, firing a beam that grazed above Nigel’s head unit.

(I won’t demand to know who you are now, but be ready. Once we’re over this, I’ll ask what’s going on.)

Daryl’s “Jesta” then followed up, firing a screen of shots to hold off the looming enemy forces. The enemy comprised of 4 units, two “Geara Zulus” and two “Geara Doga”, lined in a diamond. Nigel saw the “Unicorn” retreat behind Daryl’s machine through the CG-corrected visual on the expanded window, and controlled it burners to coordinate with Watts’ “Jesta Cannon”. Nigel fired a beam rifle at the “Geara Doga” in front, and moved his own unit such that the “Jesta” formed a triangle. He was surprised however to find the “Unicorn” positioned delicately in the axle; it was impossible to remain in the middle of the defense array for this long without grasping the movements of the three machines.

“Great judgment…”

Who is that pilot? Nigel was driven by the intrigue that rose in him at this point, and glanced at the expanded window showing the white machine. Suddenly, there was a looming pressure different from the enemy machines in front of them, and he instinctively reacted, causing the “Jesta” to rise.

“Scatter!”

Daryl and Watts moved their machines through a spinal reflex in

response to the voice as well. At the same time, a large mega-particle beam grazed the feet, and Nigel stared at where it came from. It was a ship cannon—and he felt this wall-like pressure formed by this enemy ship. The sense, different from the usual 5 senses, brought a feeling that scattered into tiny killing intents, poking through Nigel's head. (Watts!) This feeling became that of a voice.

(I see it!)

Watts answered back, and the "Jesta Cannon" flew towards where the beam came from with all its firepower. The beam cannons, rifle and Gatling guns tore trails of consecutive fires, turning 2 "Gaza D" fleets into fireballs as they approached along with the cannon shots. "Don't you dare get there!" Daryl too yelled out as a "Geara Zulu" charged at the "Unicorn", turning the "Geara Zulu" into a fireball. Nigel threw a grenade at a "Geara Doga", lit by the lights of the explosions, and the drum-sized grenade exploded in its lap, causing an expanding ring of light to engulf the moss-green machine. A sleeved mechanical arm then spun about as it got sucked into vacuum, with the instantly cooled, blueish-white gaseous explosion as the background.

The enemy units were obviously rattled after having lost their fellow units, and retreated back. They managed to take down a medium-sized fleet in an instant—even a mock battle against rookies would not net such a high score. (Heheh. The situation's getting scarily good.) Nigel however did not have any response to this line from Watts as he let out a sigh. (Yeah. It's like there's an extra eye behind us.) He then heard Daryl say this, and stared at the "Unicorn" located in the middle of the triangle.

"Is it because of that guy…?"

There was no logic to be stated, but he could sense, without a doubt, that something changed once they made contact with the "Unicorn". They sensed each other, and their presences were gradually enlarging. They only felt an overwhelming pressure from the white unit when they battled it on Earth, but it was embracing them with some form of warmth. *If this network of perceptions, which seems to cause our heads to throb, is the truth behind the power that called us here—*

A heavy, sharp hostile intent interfered with their common senses, causing their 4 units to scatter. The beam then passed by them, and the scattered particles grazed upon the "Jesta" that had evaded just in time. *It's a powerful enemy,* Nigel immediately understood this, and his body moved on its own as he searched for the source of this hostility at the other end of the beam.

It came in a similar direction as that of the ship cannon—but something was disappear. The beams were coming from behind, the side of the feet, and diagonally above, teasing the 4 units that were evading. At the same time, the array of killing intent with an unknown core closed in from all directions (Argh!?) (This guy is from back then…!) Watts and Daryl grunted, and Nigel felt the presence of that object as goosebumps rose on his skin. The large Incom cable swung about like a whip, and the attacks all around flashed without ceasing. At this moment, a unique-shaped machine bore thruster lights on its back as it flashed by the all-view monitor.

“It’s that rose-shaped mobile suit…!?”

The abnormally raised shoulder armor plates gave it its unique shape, and it was certainly unforgettable. It was the purple machine that was with the Red Comet’s “Sinanju”, and decimated the 16th Mission Fleet, which comprised of the “Carrot” and “Clog” ships. The Incom cannons graze past the machine, and another beam came in from another direction, breaking through the triangular formation of the Tri-Stars, just as before. Nigel saw two “Geara Zulu” with launcher cannons behind the purple machine. (Please fall back!) A voice however stopped him from wanting to attack.

(I’ll leave the enemy units behind to you! That guy’s aim is..!)

The call was cuts off, and the “Unicorn” was thrusted forward by the booster rockets on the back as it charged at the rose machine. The Incoms pursuing it continued to let beams fly, and the white machine dodged about like a locust as it departed, leaving Nigel speechless by how fast it was before he could even provide cover, (Leader!) He was awakened by Daryl’s call, and hurriedly grabbed onto the control stick again.

“Follow the “Unicorn” instructions. If that purple guy’s here, the Red Comet should be nearby. Pay attention!”

He gave the order, and swapped the E-pack of the rifle. The two “Geara Zulus” closing in fired their beam launchers again, and Nigel saw the high-powered mega-particle cannons shine upon Daryl and Watts’ unit. He held his breath, focused and squeezed the trigger. It was not their job to deal with the small fries, and they could not fully accept this ludicrous feeling. *But it’s better to do this, to obey the “Unicorn” instructions on this battle*. This notion however clearly appeared in his mind.

Part 17[edit]

Banagher fired the Beam Gatling guns on his beam, and squeezed his fingers on the Hyper Bazooka on the left hand. A beam flying from the bottom hit the bazooka directly, causing Banagher to let go of it was it was knocked aside.

The Hyper Bazooka exploded from within, and was devoured by light, whilst the shockwave rattled the “Unicorn”. The NT-D sign had yet to shine, and the machine’s responses were still dull. Banagher used up the last bit of booster fuel left, and broke away from the “Rozen Zulu” for the time being. The Incoms that got behind him flashed 2, 3 times, and the beams of mega particles grazed beside him.

“Funnel…no, it has cables.”

The long cables let out a long arc, and appeared in the darkness from time to time, having been shone upon by the dazzling light of the beams. Of the 2 Incom extended from the “Rozen Zulu” arms, one of them was a claw-type with a manipulator function, while the other was a shield-type with mega particle cannons installed—this was the terrifying one. It seemed to have a deflection function, as the beams fired from the 3 cannons would spread and scatter lots of scorching particles in a wide area. Banagher fired his 6 Beam Gatling guns to hold off the remote cannons commonly dubbed as Incoms, drew, his beam saber, and charged forward. Once the cable was cut, the Incoms would be nullified, but the enemy would not allow him to do so that easily. The fast moving cable seemed to be mocking the slow “Unicorn” as it started a hail of shots, crossing in a wave while ostensibly wanting to trip him.

“Fast…!”

—Just die, you.

The instant he caught sight of the “Rozen Zulu” from beyond the rumbling cable, the voice struck his mind in the form of an icy wind. “What…?” Banagher groaned as he passed through the crossing beams and chased after the purple unit that vanished again.

—I hate your guts. What’s with that model student look?

The spiteful ‘voice’ struck his skull from behind, and the particles scattered from the beams rained upon the “Unicorn”. The left and right shields were activated, opening an I-field umbrella, but the full-psycommu had yet to show signs of awakening again. The Incoms struck the “Unicorn”< devoid of the “Gundam” eyes, like a venomous snake, and the sharp claw barely managed to scrape the ankle.

“You’re not done yet, “Unicorn”…?”

—You're a stain, a stain on the white blanket. I'm going to personally eliminate you.

The snake got to the front, bared its claws and opened wide, showing the 3 cannons from deep within its mouth; and as the light of mega particles lingered, the NT-D sign reappeared again and lit up in a red light.

"It's here…!"

The impulse lashing from within the helmet exploded in the form of a weak light at the forehead. Right when the "Unicorn" lone horn was about to break into two pieces—(Don't you think about it!)a cry from reality rang just a fraction of a second earlier, and small objects were shot out from the back of the "Rozen Zulu".

6 cylindrical objects, ostensibly resembling miniature missiles, zigzagged around the "Unicorn" and transformed into antenna-like panels. In an instant, the NT-D signal quickly flashed, shrank back when they were deployed, and there were rapid alerts on the monitor regarding the malfunctioning psycommu. Banagher's nerves were being ripped along with the machines, and he let out a howl of agony as the sudden pain exploded in his skull.

Numerous warning windows appeared on the all-view monitor, and the words 'signal lost' kept flashing on it in front. The moveable frame let out rubbing sounds as they wereforcefully prevented from opening, and the pieces of sliding armor was trembling, The lone horn could not open even though it wanted to, and shuddered slightly from within, whilst the psycoframe below it flickered randomly. Banagher saw the lights flicker intensely, but was hapless. *What? What happened?* The Intention Automatic System did not respond at all, and the "Unicorn" stood still, restrained by an invisible wave, like it was electrocuted.

"The psycommu's cut off…?"

The 6 little machines surrounded the unit, and formed an octahedron—*so these funnel like obects are the culprits behind this?* Banagher raised the control stick, aimed the reticule at the objects, and swung the beam saber down. The objects let out a burst from its thrusters to dodge the dodge, and the other 5 units moved along, maintaining an octahedron shape. After missing the attack, the "Unicorn" barely managed to turn around, and the Incoms that had flown into the octahedron slammed upon its back, causing him to feel a physical impact this time.

(How does it feel to have the psyco jammer used on you? You can't do anything if you can't transform into the "Gundam.)

The Incom grabbed onto the right booster rocket, and Angelo's voice came through the claws gnawing at the armor. Banagher repeated the unfamiliar term Psyco Jammer, took the flares of mega particles that exploded from the Incom behind him, and witnessed the all-view monitor being dyed in a scorching color..

The attack from up close caused the booster rocket fuel to explode from within, turning it into a large fireball. The "Unicorn" managed to escape in time, but decelerated as it was held back by the expanding impact, and Banagher was buried in the spinny starry space. The funnel-like Psyco Jammer surrounded the machine that was quickly decelerating, and continued to release the invisible energy. The large body of the "Rozen Zulu" twitched its monoeye, and the Incom came attacking like a sickle head—.

(It's over, Banagher Links!)

Angelo's voice was off-pitched due to delight as it permeated through

the utterly terrified body, causing Banagher to sniff the stench of the death god.

Part 18[edit]

He rode upon the Hypersonic Transport chartered by Anaheim Electronics from Dakar's airport for more than 3 hours, and after flying over the Atlantic and two-thirds of the North American continent, arrived at the Federation airforce's Anti-Air Command Base in Cheyenne.

This terrain had more beasts of burden than humans in the old centuries, and even after the tragedy of the One Year War, this fact still remained. The HST landed on the plainlands of Wyoming, overlooking the darkness of the distant Rockies before it was dawn, and the landing gear was fastened on the runway, the only concrete area in the base. Ronan, together with Martha, was welcomed by his peers at the Senate Council, and rode on the military electric car; he was whisked into the underground Anti-Air Command Base before he could glance at the moonless night.

They passed through a tunnel-shaped entrance in the foothills, and the Command Center was at the end of this path located 1.6km deep inside. This was a place Ronan was familiar with; when the region was still called the United States of America, this base was built within the mountains to shield against any enemy nation's nuclear attack. The facilities and system were no different from back then; there was anti-air intellgence used to watch over the North American region. After the war, it was merely a piece of junk when the surveillance satellites were separated from the radar network, and was relegated to as a place where the leftists' soldiers were dealt with carefully. However, as it was not a place easily noticed, it became a place with some unique function over the years.

When Martha talked about the 'secret way', Ronan had already anticipated it to be this place. The wall of classified military information would not be of any use when dealing with her. He remained in the car, just like the journey before, and carelessly stared at the tunnel which could be said to be the relics of the old centuries. The hooded military electric car passed through the underground below the mountains, passed through the 25 ton blastproof door, and sent the contingent to the Anti-Air Command center.

They walked upon the uneven concrete path, was led through 3 layers of safety checks by their colleagues, and arrived at the desination. Ronan passed through the door leading into the only new place available, the space management center, and saw the exact same

scene as the one he saw on the photo.

There were 6 large screens on the wall in the front, projecting the monitored conditions of the radars and the satellite surveillances. There were more than 20 of the each facing a terminal, “Mark 2, loading complete.” “Permitting the support ship “Chitose” to retreat from the firing line.” The men and women reporting in all looked anxious, and the atmosphere of an actual battle reached them naturally. Ronan heard the metal doors slam behind him, and looked around at this classified center, which he was not completely unfamiliar with. There were often Task Forces, authorized to deal with classified information, stationed here, working on their mission separately from the soldiers of the base management, which dealt with the leftists. The Cheyenne Base was dubbed as a relic of of the old era, but it was an image used to hide the existence here.

“The “System” is moving from behind “Luna II”.”

“Position controls begin. Self-rotation restrated, Gryoscope stabilized.”

“Reticule control, matching the guide laser’s path.”

The voices of the management pinged off the tall ceiling. That ‘thing’ seemed to have been activiated, and Ronan, who did not know how she controlled the situation, was unhappy that she had already begun with the preparations as he wanted to glare at the relaxed looking Martha. “Welcome to the Caucasus Forest” however, he heard this from behind, and turned back. A high ranking officer was standing at the commander’s seat at the back of the control room, elevated half a level higher.

“I’m Vice-Admiral Ables. We once had a chat with each other at a golf match on “Luna II”.”

“I remember. Looks like Miss Martha and I have a lot of mutal friends.”

He grabbed the outstretched hand, and again glared at Martha. On the surface, he was the base commander in chare of running the leftists’ graveyard, but he was in charge of a secret mission only a few amongst them knew of, and was an elite general full of ambition. It would be easy for Ronan to deduce that there was something going on between him and the vixens of the Senate Council that was relying on the authority of the Vist Foundation, but this was not the moment to be dragged down by that. “May you please hear the current situation?” Martha did not look at Ables, who greeted her with a stare, as she hurriedly prompted Ronan, and the latter looked back at the screens in the front.

“This is the surveillance information obtained from the Moon, so the details aren’t clear. However, it seems the “Sleeves” perimeter is being broken through. The battle’s still going on though, I can’t tell how it’s going to go.”

One of the screens showed a visual of space taken from the Moon’s surface. An amateur could not tell what was going on amidst the flashing lights mixed amidst the stars. “What about “Industrial 7”?” Martha asked.

“Currently, we’ve executed a spaceway control, and up till this point, there hasn’t been any ship moving in and out from the docks. It seems the colony builder there was not activated, probably because of the damage suffered during the terrorist attack.”

The image was switched, and the projected visual became that of the sealed colony that was undergoing construction. Every space colony should be all in the same shape, but this colony had a unique shape with one end connected to the colony builder, and one could tell it was the “Industrial 7” that made the headlines because of the terrorist attack. It was an industrial port, and logically, there would be ships moving around the clock, but there was definitely no space light to be seen near the port. The colony builder too remained silent, and its snail-likeexterior remained hidden in the Shoal space.

“Targetting is complete, and we will proceed into automatic-tracking. Considering the space debris left in the path of fire, we plan to fire at 50% outpiut.This is the first actual firing after repair, but there’s no issue with the activation. We can fire only at the colony builder while minimizing the impact on the colony to the minimum.”

Ables said, “That’s how it is, Chairman Ronan.” and Martha followed up. Ronan gulped.

“We just need your approval from now on. This will solve everything.”

There was a lot of burdensome work for the Settlement Issues Council and the Vist Foundation to deal with even after working together, whether it was to explain to the internal government, or the manipulating of the media; Martha’s expression however was coldly aloof. Ronan did not immediately answer as he stared at the “Industrial 7” in the image, “Surveillance satellite K7 has caught sight of the “system”.”at the same time, he heard the voice from the operator.

“Expand the visual.” Ables commanded. The middle screen showed the image of Earth taken at low orbit, its silhouette encased in the thin atmosphere, expanded in phases. As the sun began to shine behind

Earth, the anti-glare filtered visual approached it, and there appeared a cylindrical object with the bright light in the expanded background.

This obect was orbiting in one of the Lagrange Points created between Earth and the Moon, the L3 resonance points, and when viewed from afar, was a common sealed colony just like “Industrial 7”. It was only half the size of an ordinary colony, but there was an abnormally large number of solar panels around it, and more intriguingly, there was an exposed, severed part at one end, exposing the inside hollow in space —this large barrel-like appearance obviously was not designed for human living. It was an abnormally shaped construct, a colony, and yet not one, 15km long, and more than 6km in diameter. It was…

“The colony laser “Gryps 2”, the ultimate weapon of destruction that uses the colony itself as a barrel.

Martha said. Ables glanced over at her face, but Ronan did not mind as he continued to stare at the screen.

“It’s infamous because of the internal conflicts after the war, but we’ve been secretly rebuilding it and integrating it into the fleet assembly plan…such great foresight, I must say. Did you assume this will happen?”

Martha’s stare at Ronan was full of derision, and the latter inadvertently glared back at her sidelong face, wanting to say something. “The “Nahel Argama” and the “Unicorn” have entered the Shoal Space region. However, he was interrupted by this, and could only remain silent.

“We’ve considered other strategies, but we can’t guarantee that we can stop them. Once we detect that either them or Neo Zeon will reach the “Box” first…”

There’ll be no other choice, her expression was stating this. If they used the colony laser, most of their issues would be settled. Ronan glanced his sweaty palms, and stared at the screen showing tis laser.

It was an unprecedented, said to be able to destroy entire colonies when fired at full output. The “Gryps 2” overlooked Ronan from hige above as the latter held its trigger, and pointed its large muzzle at the Shoal Space region containing “Industrial 7”—where the “Laplace Box” laid in slumber.

Chapter 2[edit]

Part 1[edit]

Due to the uneven gravitational pulls between Earth and the Moon, it gave the impression that garbage could gather easily in the vacuumed space. Of course, they were not lingering at one point, but rather, moving around the entire area at several kilometers per second. However, if one was to get in and move at a similar velocity, it would feel no different from floating amidst the countless debris. The debris field comprising of dust from the colonies, battleships or mobile suit wreckage were the remnants of the war that could not be removed even after a hundred years. A chilly presence entered the cockpit, and ostensibly, the souls of all the people killed were gather here.

No, this was not it. Perhaps the eerie feeling was the multiple killing intents crossing each other at this moment, the screams of the souls gathered in space. Riddhe Marcenas lifted his head and stared upon the flames of the battlefield flashing in front of him. He could see small lights continue to flicker amidst the floating debris. There was no sound, no heat, just a battlefield in space. There was a frosty aura from within, bringing about goosebumps, with a certain person's voice —

"This feeling…is that Banagher?"

He pressed at his head, which took a slight jolt, and muttered to himself. He knew he was getting too sensitive; the "Banshee" psycommu, functioning as a full psycoframe, would sometimes cause the pilot's neural waves to diffuse, and noise to echo in his perception. It was impossible to pick up a specific target's neural wave at this distance. Though he shook his head assuming he was thinking too much, the name Banagher was ever so depressing to him, and lingered in his mouth with a nauseating bitterness.

"Audrey…Mineva Zabi…?"

This bitterness summoned another name. He was no longer able to determine his own feelings, and looked upon the sting stabbing at his chest. *What am I doing here?* Riddhe asked himself, (Master Ensign Secret Agent, do you hear me?) and at the next moment, an overly courteous voice came through the communication channel, causing him to hurriedly lean back on the linear seat again.

(There's a weird message from the "General Revil". It seems that big shot from Anaheim's coming here on a Base Jabber.)

"Alberto…?"

Riddhe inadvertently asked as he looked down along with the main camera. The "Banshee" was on a Base Jabber platform, and he could

peer down at its head between the two manipulators holding onto its grip. He could not see the inside of the cockpit, which was covered by armor, but one could imagine the officers giving disgruntled looks at each other as they had to listen to this brat of a Special Agent Ensign. To the veteran soldiers, there was nothing more infuriating than seeing a mischievous brat abuse his special authority and remain silent.

The shield of that authority—Alberto, was arriving. Riddhe was practically a cargo for the past 9 hours, and there was a dull tremor passing through his body. He pricked his ears to the the voice from the contact loop, and it seemed the officer did not intend to ask to me in the first place. (It seems they're sending backup supplies for the "Banshee".) He said nonchalantly.

(Position wise, they'll meet us in an hour if we slow down immediately. Do we wait?)

"What's inside the backup supplies?"

(I don't know. There's too much debris, I can't secure the laser communicator. It's your call whether you want to wait or go.)

There was no sense of spitefulness in the escort officer's voice. Riddhe turned his stare right to the right, and saw flashes of explosions in the CG-corrected space.

It had been 30 minutes since they entered the Shoal Space region, and the lights of battle continued to multiply. Even after purging all the boosters, it would take less than an hour to reach the battle. Alberto definitely had his own reasons for making the trip here, and it might be better to wait for him. However, the battle situation might change in some way. What would happen if the "Nahel Argama" reached the "Laplace Box" with the "Unicorn" leading the way?

A shiver permeated through Riddhe's body, causing him to experience goosebumps. The opening of this "Box" would topple the world—and more importantly, he felt terrified of seeing everything end without being able to grasp the situation. He did not think too much, but decided in his heart that he could not wait on, "Continue on." He spoke stiffly,

"Maintain our current speed. We'll ambush the enemy in front of "Industrial 7" as planned."

Riddhe was also concerned about the contents of the support goods, but it definitely would not be a new equipment developed in such a short time, even if it was a joke. He muttered to himself, *I have to prevent the "Box" from being opened. I have to maintain the order of*

the world. I have to finish this mission even if I have to do this alone. This is the reason why I'm here. However, there was a voice in the psycommu, *Is it?* He felt that voice knock on him, (Roger that) but did not clearly hear this reply from the officer.

He bit his lips and stared at the distant battlefield. The debris floated around him slowly, and made it impossible to tell that he was moving at high speeds. Upon thinking about how this silence, which practically severed him from the world, would continue for almost an hour, he had the impulse to accelerate even if he had to finish the booster fuel.

Part 2[edit]

The 4 CIWS located at the rear engine block fired its anti-mobile suit 60mm machine gun turrets. The "Geara Doga", pursued by the crossing fires, made its way to the aft, and aimed its beam machine gun at the main thruster.

But right before it could fire the mega particles from its muzzle, the "Loto" hiding on the ship leapt off the deck and fired the Gatling gun mounted on its right shoulder. The "Loto" was a machine 2 sizes smaller than an ordinary unit, but the precise projectile hit the abdomen of the "Geara Doga", causing the unit with the Zeon insignia on the sleeve to explode. The ring of explosion expanded near the "Nahel Argama", and the shockwave and shrapnel rained above the "Loto", lying prone on the deck. The ship let out a rattling noise due to the shrapnel hitting it, and Otto, upon seeing the external surveillance monitors being covered in white light "NOW!" roared with a voice no quieter than the explosion.

"Return Juliet 006 to the ship! Are you ready, mechanics!?"

(We can finish in 7 minutes!) The mechanics team response echoed amidst the bridge, shaken by the shockwaves, as the rear surveillance cameras showed a "Stark Jegan". The pale green humanoid had depleted its anti-ship missiles, and stumbled towards the deck, looking like a walking corpse. *Looks like we have to use the emergency landing net.* Otto sensed that it would be bad if they were being fired upon when taking in a unit, and the moment he glanced aside at the portside sensor panel, a "Geara Zulu" grazed by, causing him to shiver.

He saw a painted line on its right arm, probably for identification, and heaved a sigh of relief. This "Geara Zulu" had the identification logo of the Republic Army's anti-air identification, and was definitely on their side. It was a unit belonging to the "Garencieres", labeled with the code G.

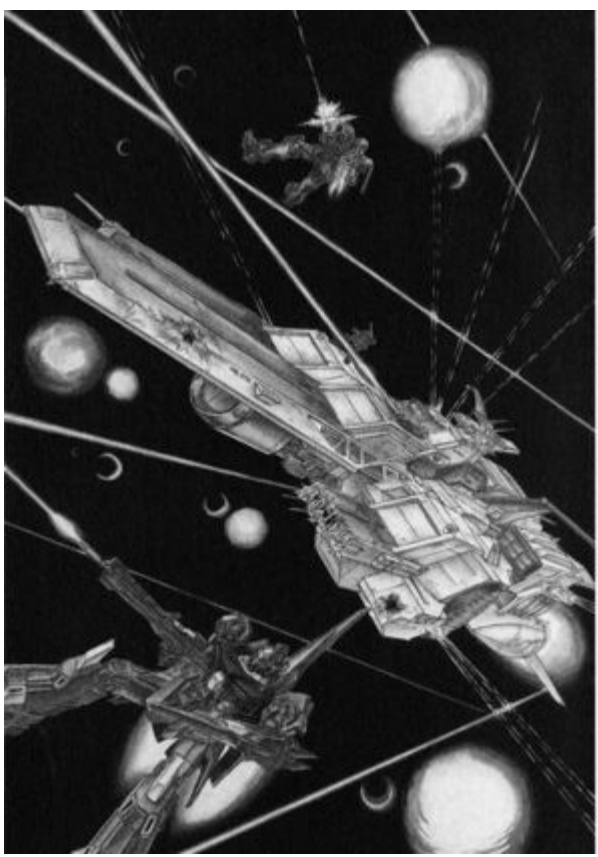
“To all escort units, with the retreat of Juliet 006 our ship’s defense capabilities is reduced by 30%. Proceed in a cluster formation and focus on defending the lone ship.”

“Massive numbers of enemy units incoming. Roaming target 13 “Musaka” will enter our firing range.”

The sensor operator’s voice overpowered Ensign Mihiro’s, leaned forth from the Captain’s seat, “I’ll leave the evading to you.” and commanded the navigation operator at the front.

“The enemy ships are still around. They’ll shoot us!”

Without waiting for the command to be repeated, he stared at the 3 markers lit on the main screen. The fleet formed by two Musaka-class ships and one disguised trading ship had set up a triangular formation in front of them, and it seemed they were still mobile given their movements. Since it was the only fleet the “Unicorn” spared when it moved forward, there was no doubt that it still had its firepower intact, and was definitely an opponent the “Nahel Argama” could not handle alone.



It had been more than 2 hours since the battle started, and though they had entered the Shoal Space Region, the number of mobile suits breaking through the anti-air perimeter had increased drastically, and the escorting units they had were unable to deal with them. It was not simply because the floating space debris obstructed them, but also because the 'iron wall' that was always in front of the "Nahel Argama" had disappeared—a fact Liam, Mineva, who was seated at the commander's seat, and all that were present in the bridge realized. *We overrelied on him, and now we have to pay the price for it?* Otto gritted his teeth as he watched the enemy markers continue to close in on them. "I heard the "Unicorn" stopped moving?" upon hearing this line, he turned behind.

A normal suit with an Anaheim logo on the chest floated into the bridge, with the person inside panting hard. Otto saw Aaron's face within the helmet, and recalled that he was the one who called the latter in. "That was 5 minutes ago", he tapped at the console on the armrest, operating it.

"Since it's from the optical sensor, we don't know the details. The lase communication's cut off."

There was a grainy telescopic visual in a corner of the main screen. It was tough to determine, but it was the CG corrected visual of the "Unicorn", which had yet to move since a while back. It was dodging the beams that were coming in from all directions, but the way it continued to roll about at the same place resembled that of a bug caught in an invisible fly trap. The 'iron wall'—the RX-0 which had practically neutralized the Neo Zeon fleet single-handedly, was isolated in a space thousands of kilometers away, caught in some strange phenomenon. "This is…" Aaron stood at the side of the Captain's seat, muttering, and the light from the explosions passed through the window, lighting his pale face.

"I heard the NT-D has an activation time limit. If that's the reason for the stoppage, there's a need to call Banagher back in."

Mineva's helmet too was lit by the same light as she spoke with a hushed voice. One could tell, without looking at her trembling state, that she wanted to scream out too. Aaron kept his eyes fixated on the visuals, "This may be one of the reasons." and cautiously answered,

"But Banagher has completely mastered the "Unicorn", and furthermore, the data shows that there's a way to adjust the burden on the body and extend the time limit. It's really too weird that he's unable to move to this extent at all. It practically seems that the Psycommu was jacked."

“Psycommu Jack?

Mineva responded to this line she never heard of before Otto could ask. “It’s different from radio waves, but psycowaves are still a form of wave.” Aaron finally looked away from and explained as he turned around.

“To jam the waves, you just need to negate it with a stronger wave. The Unicorn-types are equipped with this function.”

“Neo Zeon has such a weapon?”

“It’ll take the full psycoframe’s large amount of calculation ability to control and manipulate them, but if it’s just jacking it—”

Another shock was large enough to rock the ship, hushing the words he was about to say next. The ship accelerated due to it, and caused all the personnel to be pressed onto the linear seats. Otto grabbed Aaron’s arm as the latter was nearly thrown to the aft, and endured the pressure coming from the front. “A direct hit! It’s Juliet 006!” Liam’s voice caused him to shiver.

(Landing deck is breached! Hurry with the partition wall!)

“The “Kshatriya” is passed through! 4 incoming enemy units from down below!”

“We lost contact with Juliet 006. Lieutenant Mako…!”

(They’ll attack us! ECOAS “Lotos”, proceed to the bottom of the ship ASAP!)

(The 3rd rear cannon seems to be caught in the explosion from Juliet 006. It’s wrecked!)

The voices coming through the wireless communicator overlapped with the voices of the people on the bridge, and the annoying alarms added to the chaotic atmosphere. The “Stark Egan” on the landing deck was shot down, exploded, and affected the aft area of the “Nahel Argama”. Otto checked the external surveillance monitors, with one third of them taken offline, saw the pillaged landing deck melted away, and hollered, “The cannon operator should be headed to the 3rd main cannon! Tell him to respond!” As there was a problem with the repairing of the power connector, the cannon operator had left for the bridge 10 minutes ago. As he heard the casualty reports coming in from everywhere, Mihiro’s feeble voice answered him, “No response. He probably was caught in the explosion…” Though he had anticipated it, Otto felt his mind go blank.

Otto's stare was drawn to the empty cannon operator's seat, and he was unable to move. "Captain…!" Liam seemed to be hissing at him, but he was no longer in the mood to respond. They had to intercept the enemy units and carry out emergency repairs to the damaged areas. He had so many things to affirm, but he was unable to say anything. The emptiness in his mind gradually spread, and his thoughts were slowly devoured by it. *How many have died?* He muttered emptily within, *I dragged so many of our crew into this battle we had no chance of winning, a non-standard military operation to boot. How many of them were killed by this useless Captain—*

"Is this the end?"

The voice inadvertently leaked out, causing Liam's face to cringe, and Mineva and Aaron to gasp. It was not simply a matter of losing that 'iron wall'; the collective consciousness that bonded together because of the "Unicorn" existence was no longer around, and the feeling of isolation gave rise to a disoriented sense. Otto averted the uneasy stares from everyone, looked at the main monitor, and stared at the enemy fleet markers that were about to enter their line of fire. The enemy ships was lined in a triangular formation, with ample spaces between them ostensibly wary of the hyper mega-particle cannon. The "Nahel Argama" did not have enough firepower to aim at all 3 ships, and obviously, even if they had a lucky hit, they would take the hit from the gathered firepower of the remaining two.

We'll send a retreat signal to call back the "Unicorn", and leave the current space region we're in. But the only way we can do that is when the enemy's not firing on us. Otto glanced back at Liam, who had been staring at him, closed his eyes for a short moment, and clenched his fists on his knees tightly. *Retreat*, right when this line was about to gather at his mouth, he widened his eyes, "For the time being!" a voice rang behind him.

"Rotate the ship 270, and proceed further in that manner. When they enter our firing path, fire all cannons and shoot down the center command ship."

The hulking body dressed in a normal suit continued as he advanced to the middle of the bridge. Otto widened his eyes as he saw the man behind the gun muzzle the previous night, "Zinnerman…" Otto heard Mineva mutter, and saw Liam get up with a face full of killing intent. "You want us to face the enemy by the side?" he asked, and Zinnerman nodded,

"This explosion just now will cause the enemy to think we have a large breach. As long as we pretend to be drifting, the enemy will gather in a

cluster formation and fire at us in one go, rather than come attack us."

"Your proof? The enemy's wary of the hyper mega-particle cannon. They've been fighting in a spread formation."

"The Tennyson fleet emphasizes most on reacting according to the situation. They have the notion that their commander will hammer their heads if they lose an opportunity. Once we show a weakness, they'll react instinctively, especially since this place is the Shoal Space Region, practically their backyard."

This was a common theme amongst a fleet with strong command. Otto stared closely at the man, who hid inside the detention room after the commotion the previous night. "But the "Unicorn" still can't move." Upon hearing this, Otto turned back and stared at Aaron, who interrupted calmly,

"The psycommu jamming weapon is preventing the "Unicorn" from transforming into the "Unicorn". Without the "Unicorn" around, even if we go on like this—"

"It's fine. That brat will hang on."

"But…!"

"Doesn't the "Unicorn" have a system to identify a Newtype? Do you think a real Newtype will lose its power because of some radio waves jamming?"

Aaron and Otto were both taken aback by this unexpected logic. "That's…" while Aaron was at a loss of words, Zinnerman looked away from him and turned to the window, where the beams flashed outside. "I don't know the theory behind the machinery, but I know that guy." He stated with firm emphasis in his tone,

"He hung on up till this point, and now we can only trust in him. Just a little more, and we can break through…!"

Trust is just like a gamble. Otto continued to stare at Zinnerman, who looked completely different from the man who said those words back then, and seemed ostensibly realized why the latter came to this place. He stared at the white machine on the telescopic visual, still trapped in the intangible net. (I feel the same too, Captain.) This voice rang from the wireless communicator.

(I heard the basis of the Laplace Program is beyond the unknown. A real Newtype will exceed the values. I guess it distinguishes between natural and artificial Newtypes through the 'waves' it can't identify, and not the rigid forms of psycowaves.)

It was Gael, and Otto, who was unable to understand at least half of what he said, turned to Aaron, “Beyond the unknown.” who muttered as he looked far away. (I don’t know the basis behind the machine either.) Gael’s voice rang again.

(But let us believe! Let us believe in the possibilities the “Unicorn” shows. If we retreat now, we’ll lose some important things. Not just the Laplace Box, but also other—”

A giant flash appeared outside the window, and a stormy shockwave shook the ship. The hull rattled, echoing with the noise from the radiowaves, preventing the rest of the words from being heard. However, there was no need to listen anymore. Otto’s blank mind regained several pieces as he stared at everyone’s faces, lit by the explosion. He saw the faces of Zinnerman, Mineva, Liam, Aaron, Mineva and all the senior duty staff—they all had nothing protecting them from behind other than the term ‘trust’. They were simply driven by a reckless impulse, devoid of any thoughts about the consequences. *What will happened if we retreat now? There’s billion of people in the Earth Celestial Sphere, and I’m the one chosen to lead these 400 plus people in front of me to the frontlines. If I choose to retreat at this moment, who am I going to beg for help?*

“Deep 010 downwards, 080 portside. Continue navigating through inertial flight. Wait for the enemy to cluster, and first fire at the roaming target 12 “Musaka.”

This may be my last order as Captain. Otto had this passing thought in a corner of his mind as he finished these words,

“Then, aim at 14 and 15. Keep your eyes on the enemy ships’ movements. We only have one chance.”

Everyone nodded and faced their consoles, repeating and relaying the instructions. Otto felt the ship veer greatly as he turned to Zinnerman. The latter’s eyes met his, and his bearded face turned to Mihiro as he gave the instructions, “Send a light signal to the “Kshatriya”. Turn back immediately and maintain a distance of 15km away from the ship.” Mihiro nearly reacted to his Captain-like tone for an instant, and then turned to Otto in surprise.

“If we bring back all our units, the enemy will think that we took heavy damage. Is that enough?” He explained with an unnatural sounding voice, showing how sensitive he really was. Mihiro looked to and fro between a nodding Otto and Zinnerman, and protested, “But we don’t know if the light signal will reach in this situation…” Her sensitiveness was the reason why she would have such a reaction, for she could not

bring herself to forgive the man who was a traitor half a day ago. “Marida will understand.” Zinnerman immediately answered, and he again turned to look at Mihiro, deliberately bringing his chin back in.

“Please, Ensign Mihiro.”

This overly curt voice caused Mihiro to gasp, and turn back to the console. Otto watched her from behind as she started to send the light signal, and felt that Zinnerman could be kept here. “Captain Zinnerman, please sit at the cannon operator’s seat.” he said, and turned back to the main screen. “Thanks.” As Zinnerman spoke with a voice only Otto could hear, the latter glanced at him from the corner of his eyes, and then stared at the enemy ship markers that continued to close in. There was still no sign of these three ships gathering in a clustered formation as they remained in a wide triangular formation. Flashes of beams passed by on the telescopic visual insert beside the markers, showing a silhouette of the “Unicorn” on the defensive.

It’s still moving slowly. Are we being tested now? Otto muttered to himself as he watched the enemy ships movements, suppressing the uneasiness within him. As the shots from friendly and enemy mobile suits flew by, the “Nahel Argama” glided through space with its side facing the enemy ships, gradually approaching the firing range of their main cannons.

Part 3[edit]

The escort unit with spiked shoulder armors swung its beam hook diagonally downwards. While holding the beam saber with a reverse grip, Nigel parried the hook away, and with the recoil, flew backwards and tossed the last grenade left on the belt rack.

The exploded grenade expanded into a fireball spreading several kilometers wide, and the “Geara Zulu”, which managed to dodge at the last moment, was dyed orange. Nigel watch the escort team unit escape in the direction he had predicted, “Daryl!” He shouted into the wireless, “Roger that!” and with this response, Daryl’s “Jesta” immediately fired its beam rifle, causing the “Geara Zulu” to brake immediately as its path was obstructed by the beam. The enemy unit flailed its limbs, trying to stop and turn around using its AMBAC, but Watts’ “Jesta Cannon” got behind it at that instant.

(Got you!)

The beam cannons and Gatling guns on its shoulders let out flares, and the mega-particles rained upon the “Geara Zulu”, tearing it to shreds. The lower body left in space became a fireball, and Nigel tried

finding the remaining unit through its beam shot. The thruster flare glided between the gaps of the floating rocks, revealing the location of the other escort units. He aimed his beam rifle over there, and at that moment, the beams crossed each other, exploding in front of Nigel's line of fire, followed by the "Unicorn" moving in between the two sides.

"What's that guy doing!?"

Nigel lashed out as he pulled the control stick. The "Unicorn" passed by his feet as it continued to be toyed by the purple mobile suit's all range attacks, only evading. His movements were overly slow, even if the system had yet to cool down. Nigel spotted the escort squad sniping from the shadows of the Shoal Space region, and stared at the "Unicorn", whose movements were completely different from before. The Beam Gatling guns equipped on its arms were firing shots that were not suppressing anything at all, and the mini objects floating around the machine reflected light.

"Those funnel-like things…!"

There were many Psycommu devices surrounding the "Unicorn", and they formed an invisible cage, sealing it. Nigel followed his unconditional instinct and aimed his rifle at those objects. However, they were moving too fast, revolving as they sealed the machine, and if he was not careful, he could end up hitting the "Unicorn".

"Damn it…!"

They could not fire, and with the INCOMs warding them off, they could not approach. Nigel removed the scope as he left where he was. He faced off against an escort squad "Geara Zulu" flying out from the debris, and warded it off using his beam rifle. After that, he got behind the enemy unit, which had assumed that it had dodged, "F formation!" he growled into the wireless, and continued to fire suppressing shots at the "Geara Zulu", which had its back exposed.

(Roger!) Daryl and Watts responded, firing suppressing shots from sides. The "Geara Zulu" was flanked in 3 directions as it continued to dodge and approach the purple unit. The F formation was designated using the concept of fox hunting, by using the enemy unit as a shield and lure it towards their real objective—of course, their real objective was that purple unit. Once they could approach the mother unit, they could nullify the all-range attacks of the INCOM cannons. Since they could not remove the Psycommu devices surrounding the devices, they would attack the main unit. Nigel aimed at the escaping "Geara Zulu", and spotted the purple unit on the expanded window.

—You're in the way.

A cold 'voice' shook his skull, and a sweeping killing intent blew from his feet. Nigel instinctively used his back to move the machine, and the storm of scattered mega particles passed by from his eyes. The "Geara Zulu" was exposed to the sweeping scorching mega particles, its humanoid limbs crushed.

"Lieutenant Angelo!?" The pilot's holler was devoured by the static, and the escort unit was blown to bits, turning into a ball of light. Nigel spotted the INCOM shots coming at the 3 retreating Jesta-types, and glared at the purple mobile suit in shock.

"You attacked your ally too…?"

—Are you a stain too?

The 3 clawed INCOM was driven by the fault 'voice', and attacked him. It ignored the main unit, which was facing off against the "Unicorn", and dragged its cable tail, moving so precisely that it seemed to have a consciousness on its own. The claw INCOM fired a beam, passing by the top of Nigel unit's head, and the shield type unit fired its scattered mega-particles. The hail of beams were deflected by the I-field, covering the all-view monitor. *I'll be shot down in the next move,* Nigel thought in his blank hot mind, (Stop looking down on us, you damned brat!) and at the same time, he heard Watts' bark.

The beams and physical projectiles glided through space, and the INCOMs shook its cable tail timidly. The "Jesta Cannon" used this opportunity to attack, and fired all its weapons as it closed in on the purple mobile suit.

"Stop it, Watts!!"

The machine, infected by Watts' fiery emotions, let its shoulder cannons roar as it fired its remaining missiles, the beam rifle, and the combined machine gun. The missiles were shot down by the INCOMs, but the trail of shots searing by the purple mobile suit, causing Nigel to see it falter for the first time. The monoeye that did not look over at them all this while flickered, and the rumbling INCOMs raced through space like a serpent. The two INCOMs, coupled with the killing intent on the "Unicorn", lunged at the "Jesta Cannon", and the crossfire was gathered upon the unit with the enhanced armor.

The "Jesta Cannon" soon got hit, and lost the Gatling cannon on its left shoulder, but it continued to assault the purple mobile suit. (Watts!) Daryl hollered as he provided covering fire, while Nigel drew the beam saber, attempting to cut the INCOM cables, but ended up tripping over

his unit's feet. As his vision spun about, he spotted the "Jesta Cannon" turn into a large fireball, the purple mobile suit dodging the shots, and the "Unicorn" being left in the lurch. The white machine was caught in an invisible cage, its consciousness murky—

(You brat. You don't know anything about virtue! What are you fighting for!?)

The "Jesta Cannon" separated the additional armor by igniting its explosive bolts, and readied itself as it wielded a beam saber on the left, charging at the purple mobile suit as Watts growled. The thrown grenades exploded one after another, and the purple mobile suit flew out from the fireball, getting behind Watts' unit. An INCOM then got to the front, firing its mega particles, shooting off the "Jesta Cannon" right shoulder. ""Unicorn", provide support!" Nigel, upon seeing this, exclaimed, but the splintered right arm of Watts unit drifted in space as the beam rifle shots flew everyone. The thoroughly battered "Jesta Cannon" raised its beam saber on the left hand and sliced at the purple mobile suit.

—What an annoying fellow.

The goose neck-like INCOMs were driven by the furious 'voice', and attacked the "Jesta Cannon". The beam from Nigel's unit could only graze the side of the cannon, and the mega particles fired from the bottom and side turned Watts into the intersection of a crossfire.

(Am I going to die here?)

The "Jesta Cannon" had its generator ignited, creating a large ring of light in the Shoal Space. (Watts!?) Daryl screamed, but the expanding fireball engulfed it, and a shockwave spread across, depraving Nigel of the knowledge that his subordinate was killed as he was knocked several kilometers away.

The mini nova-like light, which burned and vaporized Watts' existence, spread around. The light pushed back the purple mobile suit as it ostensibly had a will, pushed Nigel and Daryl's units away, and rustled the 6 Psycommu devices surrounding the "Unicorn".

Part 4[edit]

There was a light so dazzling one could ostensibly feel the radiowaves permeate through the armor, overpowering his sights as it spread in his mind. The light caused the pressure of the psyco jammer to fade away from his body and mind, and a 'voice' his ears could not receive rang in his mind.

—It's really embarrassing, to step down like this after all that big talk. I'll leave the leader and the rest to you.

It was not Angelo. This 'voice' was barbaric, yet gentle, depreciating himself for living like this, and with a sense of loss gripping his chest, entered the "Unicorn". "Who is it…?" Banagher was awakened by his own groan, and blinked his eyes. One of the PsycoJammers had a radiation plate, spinning like a petal as it glide by the front of his eyes.

At that instant, the "Unicorn" fired the Vulcan guns on its head, but it was not something done through the use of the Intention Automatic System. Perhaps that 'voice' that had entered the machine was controlling Banagher, causing him to squeeze the trigger on the control stick, but he did not have time to affirm. One of the Psyco Jammers was destroyed, and he sensed a hole opening in the perimeter. The notion to attack rose within him, and the "Unicorn" received the signal as its arms spread to the side, activating the twin-barreled Beam Gatling guns on both sides.

"These things—!"

The Gatling guns bundled in a bunch on the back let out thick beams, and 6 trails of fire were scattered everywhere, hitting another 2 of the Psyco ammers. (You…!?) Angelo's groan rang through the wireless communicator, and Banagher, who escaped from the perimeter of Psyco Jammers, followed the direction where the voice came from, and picked out the uniquely shaped "Rozen Zulu". That purple death god with the light of a human life within was dazzling, with nowhere to go as it stood there—!

"You aren't seeing anything…!"

Banagher drew the beam saber and stepped on the pedal. He got right at the enemy unit's feet before it could let its INCOMs roam and let out crossing mega-particle shots.

"You just see what you want to see and deny everything else…!"

(What can I do? There's nothing worth seeing!)

The "Rozen Zulu" passed through the blueish-white gaseous remnant of light as it dragged its thick cables, moving from above to behind Banagher. The shots from the INCOM cannons grazed past the "Unicorn" right when it was about to turn around, and it was too late by the time Banagher realized he was in trouble. The remaining 3 Psyco Jammers surrounded the machine, and the invisible waves negated the psycowaves, engulfing Banagher.

(Humans are all stubborn. Trust will only earn betrayal.)

The neural senses linking to the machine was severed, and the dispersion of the 'presence' was sealed within the body, making it feel heavy and rigid. Banagher let out a voiceless scream, and during this time, the "Rozen Zulu" got in front of him, the INCOM cables twitching like they were touched.

(Trust will only bring about hurt.)

The clawed INCOM swirled around the "Unicorn" as the cable ensnared towards it. The shield-type INCOM fired its scattered mega particles, and Banagher used the manual controls to deploy the left and right shields.

(You're the same too. Your unselfish kindness enrages me!)

The beams were weakened due to the dispersal, but they still interfered with the I-field on the shields, causing the "Unicorn" cockpit to be shaken violently. The shocks, seemingly filled with Angelo's hatred, hit the machine over and over again, lashing at Banagher's body and mind mercilessly.

(As long as you're around, the Captain will act weird. The Captain's an existence beyond that of humanity, that's why he's worth trusting, and you…!)

The "Unicorn" took an impact that was beyond what the I-field could hold, and was parried backwards. The "Rozen Zulu" was closing in with pressure, and as the cables tied the "Unicorn" tightly, the claw-shaped INCOM moved in front of it as it slowly rose, covering Banagher's sights.

(I won't let you take him away, I won't let you corrupt him! You're a stain! A stain on the white bedsheet! Disappear!)

The claw grabbed the "Unicorn" head, and the 3 cannons hidden within were pressing on its face. The 3 cannons covered the sights of the all-view monitor, but right when the mega particles, looming inside the barrels, were about to be fired, Banagher sensed an icy stare from another person piercing through the cockpit.

A red machine glided through the sea of debris, just right before the claw was about to cover his sights. Banagher recalled that masked face showing a smile, and had a vision of the Red Comet giving an observing look from afar. It was not protecting, nor was it condescending; his eyes were merely watching without a trace of emotion, not responding to the emotions lavished upon him,

continually showing the everchanging light and shadow.

Is this the superhuman strength of Full Frontal, the only one Angelo could trust? Banagher suddenly asked himself, and answered himself with conviction, livid that the “Sinanju” would not approach. The way he acted in a supernatural manner would only call for others to follow him. People all had their illusions about his silence, filling themselves with malaise. *Is it strange for me to be with Frontal? Because I asked him to take off his mask? Because he agreed? No, that’s just to get me to join. That man views different people differently, he can show many different faces, and up till this point, nobody saw his true image. It’s because there’s a need to hide this that he has to put on the mask.*

Angelo understands this, and that’s why he’s unable to take this. He can’t stand the fact that Frontal has another side other than the one he shows to Angelo himself. If he admits it, his imagery of Frontal’s perfection will be crushed, and the illusions resting on him will be crushed. Right, he’s not superhuman, he’s a vessel, just as he said, a vessel acting according to what others hope for, reflecting the face others want to see on his face. There’s no emotion, sincerity in this existence, he’s like an inorganic mirror reflecting the world. If he’s acting according to his own will, that man—

A scorching impulse soared and ruptured from within him. He felt the thoughts, which happened in 0.1 seconds, seep out from his opened pores, passing through the severed neural senses, and even causing the “Unicorn” to rumble.

The full psycoframe suddenly glowed, and heat, taking the form of a flash, coruscated from his forehead. At the same time, the “Unicorn” lone horn split to the sides, and the facemask popped out, knocking aside the INCOM claws.

(What…!?)

The white armor overpowered Angelo’s shaken voice as it continued to slide. The cables were nearly snapped by the expanded armor pressing against them, and the “Unicorn Gundam” used this chance to spread its limbs out, breaking free from the bondage of the INCOMs. Banagher ignored the INCOMs that were aiming at him, and stared at the “Rozen Zulu” in front of him. The light from the Psycoframe gradually changed from red to green, and then, a rainbow luminous light arose from the cockpit. The rose-inspired machine in front too released the same light, vaguely showing the cockpit hitting in the abdomen.

The psycoframes resonated, creating a psyco field. If this was

triggered by human consciousness—Banagher closed his eyes and sent the current of 'presence' towards the machine. His body was covered with goosebumps as he became one with the "Unicorn Gundam", and all the senses were linked to the machine, causing him to even feel the frigid cold of vacuum. At the same time, the shield on the back was activated, taking an X-shape as its psycoframe parts were giving off a rainbow light as well.

The shield seemed able to move on its own as it glided beside the machine, blocking the beams of the INCOMs. The right arm shield too glided into space along with its joints, blocking the beams that were firing in from other angles. The two shields were moving freely like funnels, and the I-field generator at the top deflected the blocked beams. Through the main camera, Banagher spotted the "Rozen Zulu" falter as its all-range attacks were nullified, and swung the beam saber in his hand, releasing beam particles from within.

"Look at reality! Angelo Sauper!"

The "Unicorn Gundam" broke through the scattered beams that were blocked by the shield as it began its assault. The Psycoframe got brighter, and the rainbow light engulfed the "Rozen Zulu" as Angelo's eyes could be visualized upon its monoeye, widening in trepidation.

Part 5[edit]

The "Unicorn Gundam" engulfed in a rainbow light closed in from the front. *I've never seen a glowing phenomenon like that before. What's going on? Is that its true identity—did he activate the true identity of the psycoframe?*

He could not think. *I'll be gnawed away, it's a monster.* His primal instincts were howling, "Ps-Psyco Jammers!!" and he hollered with all his might.

There were still 3 Psyco Jammer units left, and they surrounded the "Unicorn Gundam", releasing their interference waves at it. The Anti-Psycommu System would release an artificial psycowave that would overload the receivers of the psycommu devices, but they were unable to work as they were designed to. The monitor indicated that the fake psycowaves were in disarray, forming a different waves. The Psyco Jammers were devoured by an unknown wave, negated in the process —

"What's this power…!? A wave that can't be digitalized…that can override the psycowaves from the Psyco Jammer!?"

(What cheap tricks are you trying! Thinking of sealing the Psycommu?)

The beam saber flashed, and the Psyco Jammer was sliced in half, becoming a ball of light. The Psyco Jammers continued to be sliced once after another, letting out explosions of light as the “Unicorn Gundam” closed in with its eyes glowing. The two shields danced about freely, surrounding the glowing machine, blocking the shots from the INCOMs one after another. Angelo leaned back onto the linear seat. He had fully checked through it before, and knew that shield was just a metal block with an I-field generator on it, that there were no thrusters on it.

“So why can an ordinary shield move around like that!?”

He tried moving the machine backwards, including to escape from the rainbow light surrounding him. At that instant, the “Unicorn Gundam” kept its beam saber on its left manipulator, and opened its palm wide at him. There was an unknown pulse created from it, causing Angelo’s heart to resonate, and the “Rozen Zulu”, now trapped, was unable to move at all. He saw the Psycommu monitor showing a malfunctioning sign on it, and then sensed the INCOMs aimed right at him, releasing killing intent from two directions.

“Eek…!”

He controlled the control sticks, flaring the thrusters. The INCOM cannons shots grazed by the “Rozen Zulu” as it flew away, and the scattered particles from another direction again grazed by its feet. The two INCOM let out a crossfire, intertwining the “Rozen Zulu” as it ostensibly tripped over itself. *The Psycommu got hijacked?* Angelo was driven by this impulse corroding his mind, and did not have the time to think it was possible as he continued to evade. The grazing beams scorched the “Rozen Zulu” petal-like armor, and the purple petals were wilting pitying by the weapons used against him.

—Frontal doesn’t have any use for you. He’s just watching.

The wave became that of a ‘voice’, and rang in Angelo’s mind, blank with fear. He widened his eyes, and looked around.

—You never intended to see the true identity of Frontal. You’re scared that the illusion shown on that mask will be destroyed.

That’s why I’m angry that he removed the mask in front of that guy— the voice rang in his heart, “WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?” He hollered, and turned the machine around. Using the time where he escaped from the INCOM’s attack range, he reeled the cables back in. The claws and shields were reeled back in and attached to its arms, and the “Rozen Zulu” flared its thrusters to maximum output as it leapt away.

“What do you understand anyway!?”

As long as he reeled the INCOMs back in, there was no need to fear the waves. Angelo continued to fire the mega particle cannons on the shield as he let his machine charge at the “Unicorn Gundam”.

“The Captain saved me!”

He crashed the mobile suit into a “Unicorn Gundam”, which had floated in front of it, opened the claws on the left arm, and grabbed it. The 3 claws crushed the I-field generator, and the shattered shield was covered by a triggered explosion.

“He said he’ll rely on me…!”

He also said that it’ll be a lonely sight not to see that rose everyday. Angelo hushed the rising anxiety within him as he swung the claws at the “Unicorn Gundam”.

—That’s a lie. Frontal just standing on a high ground, and he won’t help you, not in the past, and never in the future.

The white machine dodged with an instantaneous-like motion, and continued to give off this unnerving ‘voice’ that continued to wreck him. It was a sharp blade that turned his trust and love for Frontal into a curse, destroying his body. *Right, there’s no compromise for excessive love. As long as our thoughts differ a little, I’ll feel betrayed.* “Anything will do!” Angelo howled as he aimed the mega particle cannons on the shield at the front.

“The Captain has a destiny to be the King of the abandoned, the one who can purify this corroded world. For him, no matter what happens to my body…!”

—How pitiful you are.

The beam saber was swung vertically downwards, severing the shield attached to the right arm. The “Unicorn Gundam” then moved in a refined Japanese Iaido motion as it closed in, its eyes glowing, causing Angelo to blankly stare at its face while forgetting to check on his unit’s damages. It was no longer a machine, but a person engulfed with fighting intent. The ‘presence’ became the light released by the Psycoframe, and the giant human was breathing in space—

“What…human is that? A giant?”

—Show the source of that twisted heart of yours.

The ‘voice’ of the giant, not Banagher, was ringing in his mind as its giant hand covered his sights. *I’ll be crushed, I’ll be gnawed, that unremovable stain will corrupt my pure world.*

“CAPTAIN!?”

Angelo shouted, but the white hot psycoframe light swallowed his body whole—

It was a white, speckless light. Angelo felt a soft fabric-like feeling from within, letting out a rustling sound.

“You really love the blanket, don’t you, Angelo?”

It was the silhouette of a really large woman, smiling as her back faced the light. His face was touched by her slender and soft fingers, and Banagher knew consciously: *This is Angelo’s mother.*

“Hey, mama can’t do the laundry like this, you know?”

The burly arms carried Angelo as the latter hid within the blanket. From beyond the shoulders of Angelo’s father, Banagher saw a pure white

sea of bedsheets. It was a safety zone of warmth and cleanliness, a sanctity separated from the world, where terrifying, filthy things would never enter—

—Stop, it.

The splattered blood stained the sea of bedsheets. Angelo, who was just 3 years old, witnessed the reddish-black blemishes on that whiteness.

The butt of the rifle was slammed into papa's nose, and with one heavy hit after another, his face was completely contorted, his body falling limp. Those burly arms were no longer of any use, and the blood flowed while the pulse throbbed, forming a new stain on the bedsheet.

"You murderer!"

Mama shouted, but the soldiers in Federation uniforms sneered as they held her down. Angelo had witnessed this scene from the gap in the cupboard. Drenched in blood was the slab of flesh that used to be papa, and the face of mama, contorted with fear.

"What human language is this Zeon swine saying!? Anti and Lippi were killed because you threw a colony on them!"

The soldiers pushed mama onto the bed. Many military boots stained with blood and dirt trampled upon the white bedsheets as they pressed on mama. He could no longer see mama's face, only her white legs protruding out from amidst the men as they took off their pants, flailing about like the hands of a clock. *She's eaten, she's being chewed on*, Angelo thought. He could not let out a voice, not because papa told him to, but that he really could not. He too was being broken down along with his mother, who was eaten, gnawed, devoured, crushed—

—Don', look.

The pure bedsheet was devoid of stains, but icy cold. Mama sat on the bed, her eyes looking cold as she stared outside the window. Angelo gave her a rose brooch on her birthday, giving her a trace of color in her transparent shadow.

Mama never saw that purple. Her body was still present, but her heart was shattered. Even after helping her put on that brooch, she never noticed Angelo.

"It has been 7 years? She's a survivor of Globe, but at that state…"

“To think the Master was willing to take her in. I heard that her deceased husband was a colleague of the Master, but she’s no longer able to serve her duty as a wife in that state, right?”

“Actually, it’s rumored that the Master kept his living family to gain the privileges for that job. Also, he just divorced his previous wife. You see, the Master…”

The maids’ incessant chatter could be heard from a corner of the wide room. Angelo listened in as he sat at his mother’s beside. His body, 10 years old, had pieced together what was once crushed, bit by bit, but it was still incomplete, for the important piece called mama was still fragmented.

Another silhouette suddenly appeared from behind, and the damp hand was placed onto Angelo’s slender shoulders, causing the latter’s body to jerk in shock.

“Mama’s heart is still far away today. Come on, Angelo, it’s time to pray. Let’s pray with papa.”

No, you’re not papa. However, the call of denial was unable to become a voice, and his frozen body was unable to move due to fear. Angelo was ushered by the wet hand into the bedroom of the house’s Master.

Over there, he too was chewed to bits that night. The unnerving tongue licked on his chest, back, butt crack, breaking his body and mind into fragments, and the heavy flesh caused his body to creak. He had been prayer every night since he was 9…a necessary ritual to let his mother live on. Of course, he resisted at first, and wanted to take his mother and run away. However, his mother would not leave that bed, and she could only live on that white bedsheet.

He had to endure the blemishes for his mother’s bedsheet to remain white. He had to let this unnerving slab of flesh have a reason to keep them. Even when he was being gnawed at every day, even when his body was inserted with filthy liquid, even when he became a stain blemishing the bedsheet.

“That’s right. Good boy. Our prayer will reach your mother one day.”

The heavy breathing of the flesh block was upon Angelo’s ears, and he saw his tears stained on the bedsheet. The corroded tears were being squeezed out of his body, together with blood and feces, becoming the stains on the bedsheet—

—Don’t, come in.

It had been a long time since he had a bath, and the previous customer's stench remained on the stained bedsheet. Angelo's face was pressed on the rough fabric as he felt the saliva and sweat drip from the 'customer'.

"It's about time."

"A little longer…I heard there's quite a good one, so I deliberately came all the way from "Zum City", you know?"

"Another 20 then."

"Heheh…I'll pay."

"The 'customer' breathing got hasty. This was a middle-aged man who probably had a wife and children waiting for him once he returned home, and once he was done, he would hurriedly put on his clothes and leave this brothel, like he was terrified of being infected. *How weird,* a 16-year-old Angelo thought with his lips twisted. He used to be the one corrupted, and now he was the one corrupting others. He was being polluted while sullying others, and seemed to be maintaining his own personality as he remained stained.

His prayers never reached, and his mother jumped down from the balcony and died when the servants were not paying attention. He did not cry, for his tears were to flow when he was covered with filth, and not when he lost something. He too knew that praying never worked right from the beginning.

He did not attend the funeral, and left that mansion, wandering through the colonies of the Republic. After 3 years, he reached this street, a street filled with filthy people like him, a place with stench reeking all over the roads and neon lights. As long as his body remained, he would not have to go hungry. Even when he was gnawed into a battered, tattered body, there was no lack of visitors who would pay money for him.

There was no pain at that place; if he did not believe, he would not be betrayed; if he did not want it, he would not lose it. It was a lot more comfortable than forcing 'trust' and 'future' onto himself. When the filth had gathered to a point where it would leak out from him, he could vent all his frustrations through alcohol and drugs. On the first day he arrived, the hoodlum assigned to raise the protection fee and take care of him seemed to have joked, "The angel has fallen into the sty." *Right, there's no need to worry about being fallen. If I continue to fall, I'll merely be dumped on the roadside like a bug. At that time, a real angel will definitely come and bring me* ***up****.*

However…this isn't everything, Angelo thought. After being thrusted in by the desires of the 'customers', and after seeing his acquaintances being tossed onto the roadside coldly, he felt a searing heat permeate through his mind. Even if he burned the whole world down, it was not enough; the energy within him, which could vaporize his filth at any given moment, was looking for another avenue to escape. *Before I end up leaving the world, I have to vomit everything out until it is clean. I was too young when the tragedy at Globe happened. Because of mama, my burden, I never thought of venting on that disgusting slab of meat. No, even if the burden had vanished, I never chose to do it. Maybe it's because I instinctively know that it's not enough for me to vent completely. It's not worth killing someone and get my freedom taken away.*

Perhaps all I need is a trigger. And to use this energy, I need someone else to squeeze the trigger. But that's probably not going to be a person, Angelo wondered. *Humans are too weak, humans will betray each other, they'll take away, destroy, corrupt others—and cause all these happenings on the world. I have to raze them all, but I need something that's beyond human. God? Devil? None of it matters. All I need is an existence that an angel can follow, no matter what it is.* His desire for an encounter with that existence brought a strong sense of rhapsody and blissfulness, one more potent than drugs. It was an overwhelming ecstasy for this body, which was already devoid of sexual delight and enthusiasm.

It's not that far away. He had a feeling that the object was just inches away from him. Like him, the object had an impulse to raze everything in the world to the ground. The flame of revolution, which would burn all filth away and changing a new bedsheet, was slowly approaching.

He would not mind the filth Angelo had, for he had surpassed humanity. As long as he offered his body to that man, who would never taint nor be tainted, he could return to that bed again. That cleanliness and warm white bedsheet, the sacred ground where only he, mama and papa existed, where nobody else could approach.

The ecstasy quivered within him. The delightful squeals of the 'customers', the filth from others that intruded upon him—

"YOU SAW!!?"

A voice erupted, shaking Angelo's hearing as he ostensibly fell back into his body. The dual-eyed sensors filled the all-view monitor, showing a skeptical light. (Angelo…!?) a call rang from reality.

"What did you do? WHAT DID YOU DO, YOU BASTARD!!?"

He was seen through, blemished, trodden by something that barged it. It was practically rape, just like the uncomfortable slab of flesh and the ‘customers’. Angelo moved the control sticks erratically, trying to shake off the “Unicorn Gundam” pressing down on him. (Calm down, Lieutenant Angelo!) Banagher’s voice rang through the contact loop.

(I know about you, and you know about me. People can understand each other; there’s no reason for us to fight each other!)

Know? See? I saw you. I know you. How you inherited your father’s ideals, how you lived together with your mother, how you kept changing yourself as you interact with humans, how you are entrusted with the possibility that surpasses generations.

We’re too different. You’re too dazzling. We can’t get along. It’s impossible. You saw me. It’s too embarrassing. I hate this.

“GET OUT FROM MY HEART!!”

Banagher’s thoughts still lingered in his heart. He, with that overly upright thinking of his, continued to give off light without further thought, proclaiming that humans can change. *You’re just like your father, using your strong self as the standard, not knowing when to look back at the weak. Captain, where’s the Captain that fills my darkness and calms me down—?* Angelo continued look for Frontal’s mask as he continued to struggle, his mind being a mix of confusion, hollers and angst. *I’ve been seen, I’ve been recognized. Got to kill this guy fast, got to make this guy disappear from the world before the stain spreads.*

(Angelo…!)

Banagher’s voice rang through the cockpit, and the “Unicorn Gundam” held down the shaking “Rozen Zulu”, showing a horrifying light. *No, I can’t win, I can’t shake him off, everything will be exposed under the light.* In his sub-consciousness, Angelo pressed the INCOM activation switch, and gathered his focused thoughts into the Psycommu.

“If you don’t get out…!”

The remaining clawed INCOM fired its cannon, and the tail-like cables spun about in space. *This is the only way to cut off the mixture of thoughts and get rid of all the filth—right, I should have done that right from the beginning. Why didn’t I think about it earlier? If that happens, I won’t have to be trampled by that slab of flesh.* Angelo stared at the INCOM, spinning counterclockwise in a long arc, from beyond the shoulder of the “Unicorn Gundam”.

This is good. The source of the filth that caused Frontal to fall, the stain that sullied the clean bedsheet, can be chased out now.

(Stop it, Angelo!!)

Banagher yelled, but Angelo showed a contorted smile on his sweaty, teary face.

“I, win…”

The INCOM flew in from the flank of the “Unicorn Gundam”, and stabbed into the “Rozen Zulu” abdomen. There was no mistake in the aim, and the claws crushed the ball-shaped cockpit block, ostensibly biting through his armor, digging out his heart. The cracking sounds of impact seemed to be either the sound of the Psycoframe surrounding the cockpit being crushed, or the sound of his synchronized thoughts with Banagher being crushed. Either way, Angelo was thrown out from the linear seat, his body crashing into the inner wall of the dilapidated cockpit.

It felt as if his limbs were fractured as the shock pierced through his skull, expanding in his mind that was turning blank. It was not darkness, but blank white. His thoughts, which were forcefully ruptured, had been reinstated to an original blank state. *I won’t be dirtied again, nobody can touch me.* The air was sucked out from the crack along the inner wall, and Angelo floated in the cockpit that was instantly filled with vacuum, staring at the Psycoframe light that was released.

The image had vanished, and the inner wall was filled with the color from the cracked monitor panel, the same bright purple color as the brooch he gave to his mother. *I see,* Angelo understood everything in his blank. *Mama too did the same thing, digging out her own soul and crushing it so that she won’t be stained again—*

The “Unicorn Gundam” stood around blankly, fading away on the other side of the crack. It too faded away from his sights, and vanished in the blankness. *Serves you right. You won’t be able to get me. Who wants to get on with you? Only the Captain can enter my heart. Captain…the mask of darkness belonging to the king of the forsaken…the Red Comet that came from the abyss of space…comet? I know what that is. I saw that on TV a long time ago. There was a large comet giving off a bright light. It seems it’ll be a few years later the next time it reaches Earth. When you’re at the age when you’re older than papa… right, that’s what mama taught me.*

“Mama, papa…”

Where are they? I've to look for them. Angelo's thoughts were interrupted and devoured by the blankness as his clear eyes stared at the crack in the cockpit.

The stars were flowing, and the world had returned to nothing. There was nothing terrifying or filthy. The blankness in his mind would wash and remove everything, and in this purified, white world, he finally gets back the pure white bedsheet—

Part 6[edit]

There was still some little spark lights coming from the abdomen where the INCOM had stabbed into, and the "Rozen Zulu" had fallen silent, fading away. It would be more appropriate to call this silent item as a corpse rather than scrap metal as it glided through space, merged into the Shoal Space region and being absorbed into the darkness.

"Angelo…"

The Psyco field formed between the two machines faded away, and the absolute zero vacuum surrounded the "Unicorn Gundam".There was no further killing intent, and none of Angelo's numbing expression. The brightness of the Psycoframe decreased as it reverted back to its usual red color, and Banagher could only watch the "Rozen Zulu" leave reluctantly.

It was just like his experience with Marida—their thoughts had synchronized, and they could share their hearts with each other, but this time, he was refused at the last second. Angelo destroyed himself, his mind shattered like a glass art piece. Banagher too admitted to himself that this was undoubtedly a way of killing others too. There was none of Angelo's heart anymore, just a flesh with blank eyes like his mother.

Is it because I'm weak? Or is it a crime to enter other people's hearts—is that so? Then, a Newtype is—

(You destroyed him.)

A cold voice rang from above Banagher's head, and he immediately froze, clenching his tense hands.

(Such an insolent power. You have no right to forcefully enter other people's hearts.)

The red machine went from above his head to behind. As the killing intent intensified, the "Unicorn Gundam" Psycoframe again brightened. Banagher let out a small sigh and focused his consciousness at the back. The shield floating in space gave off a rainbow, and moved

behind the machine like a hunting dog pricking its ears. The red machine moved slightly as its monoeye flickered.

“You were just watching from afar…!”

The “Sinanju” beam rifle fired a shot of light the moment Banagher turned around. The direct hit from the powerful beam overloaded the generator, and once the I-field was destroyed, the shield was knocked away. An incoming grenade then blew the shield apart, and the scattered Psycoframe fragments dazzled like scales. Banagher let the “Unicorn Gundam” fly through the dazzling particles, and the white giant let out a rainbow trail as it closed in on the scarlet red mobile suit.

(You’re too dangerous. You’re showing how a Newtype is like too carelessly.)

The beam Gatling guns let out 6 trails of beams as they fired at the same time, and the “Sinanju” evaded sideways. Banagher turned the machine around, pointing the barrels on the right hand at the enemy. However, there were no shots left. Right when his mind went blank, the ”Sinanju” fired the bazooka attached to the beam rifle, and the object released a trail of gas as it closed in on the “Unicorn Gundam”.

(This will bring about the disgust and oppression from the Oldtypes, and you shall be burned to nothingness.)

As the barrel was shortened, the initial velocity was a lot slower than usual—however, the bazooka shell was still moving quickly due to the thrust from the unit. The approach controls triggered the shot, and hundreds of scattered shots were released in a spread array. Banagher increased the throttle of the “Unicorn Gundam” to the maximum, and advanced towards the “Sinanju” before the scattered shots could catch up to him.

“Aren’t you a Newtype too…!?”

(Is that so?)

Banagher threw the empty Beam Gatling guns at the enemy as he accelerated, and the 4 Gatling guns, 2 on the back and 2 on the right arms, fired upon the red machine like arrows, and the “Sinanju” lost its balance, firing its beam rifle. It certainly was atypical of him to fire about randomly. And right when Banagher continued to advance without slowing down, *he got me,* this instinct exploded from his forehead in the form of a thin light, and he rolled the “Unicorn Gundam” to the side. The next instant, the consecutive bazooka shots grazed past the nose of the machine, and pellet bags kept exploding.

The “Unicorn Gundam” managed to avoid the direct hit, but was still caught in the maelstrom of pellets, and decelerated as a result. It was unable to adjust itself using the AMBAC, and the “Sinanju” closed in immediately, flashing its monoeye as it aimed the bazooka barrel under the beam rifle at him. *This is the end,* the moment he thought this, another beam shot in from another direction, keeping the “Sinanju” away. The red machine gave up on shooting and exerted its thrusters to the maximum output, and let out a trail of thruster flare as it flew vertically upwards, block the 2 thruster lights coming from behind.

(“Unicorn”, are you alright?)

The IFF indicated two RGM-96X “Jestas”, attacking the “Sinanju” from two directions, top and bottom. Their movements were very sharp, perhaps because they wanted revenge for the 3rd unit that was lost, and they were full of vigor. However, their overly powerful ‘presences’ would be dected by Frontal. Banagher predicted the movements of both sides, and saw through the trap the “Sinanju” had set. “Back down!” He yelled as he fired the Beam Magnum.

The beam that was twice the thickness of an ordinary beam stopped the “Jestas” from moving onwards. (What are you doing…!?) Banagher however ignored the pilot yelling this as he yelled, “Don’t you look anywhere else, Full Frontal!” The red machine responded, (Very well.) and left the reticule at high speeds, rising towards the head of the “Unicorn Gundam”.

「ここから先は通さん、と言っておこうか、バナージくん」
「押し通るっ!」(本文より)

(Let me say this first, Young Banagher. I won't let you pass through.)

"I'll force my way through then!"

The "Unicorn Gundam" drew its beam saber, and its main thrusters flared as it tried to get behind the "Sinanju". There were only 2 sets of Beam Magnum magazines, so he could not fire carelessly. He fired off the few remaining rounds from the Beam Gatling guns attached to the left arm as a deterrence, and then predicted how Frontal would dodge as he turned his machine sharply. The "Sinanju" flew down the path he had predicted, and right when they were about to clash, he swung the beam saber down. The "Sinanju", which had passed by, turned around before Banagher could feel any impact on the control stick, and spread its body wide at the "Unicorn Gundam".

The Psycoframe let out a resonating sound, and the "Sinanju" abdomen and joints let out a rainbow glow. The rear unit resembling a wing was spread out, and the moveable thrusters sticking to the shins were pushed out from the supporting frame. The machine seemed to have transformed into a hi-mobility state as it released a glowing

rainbow light, and Banagher instinctively retreated the “Unicorn Gundam”. The glowing lights clashed and fused between the two machines as they pulled away from each other, and the light from the Psyco field expanded in an explosive manner.

The ripple-shaped light shook the surrounding space debris, and ejected the two “Jestas”. Banagher felt apologetic to them, but there was no way an ordinary machine could take part in this battle. Once the excessive objects were removed, the field created by the two psyco machines was filled with the duo’s killing intent, and with abated breath, Banagher held his beam saber again. The “Sinanju” too raised the shield suspended on the left hand, and activated the twin-sided beam axes equipped on the back.

The axes, fixed on the shield, spun around, and a pair of beam blades burst out from the tip of the shield. The terrifyingly large beam blades, with the shield as the hilt, resembled that of an abnormally large crab. The “Sinanju” swung the beams that was taller than the machine itself, and crouched forward as it released the thruster flares on its back. The “Unicorn Gundam” too lit its main thrusters. The beams kept attacking, the beam blades clashed intensively as the two machines crossed each other, letting out sparks.

This is the only guy I can’t lose to. The “Unicorn Gundam” was driven by this instinct as it swung its beam saber down. The “Sinanju” tonfa swung up at the same time, and the clashing beams caused the psyco field light to quiver.

Part 7[edit]

The 2nd main cannon equipped at the belly of the ship let out a trail of mega-particles after the 1st main cannon on the bow was fired. The arrows of beams released from the “Nahel Argama” carved out pink trails, and weak lights of explosions appeared on the other end of space.

It was the light of a direct hit—*is something shot down?* Marida felt a killing intent vanish as she immediately gathered her concentration on the enemy ship at her left.

The “Nahel Argama” had disguised itself as a ship unable to steer, and lured the enemy ships to gather in a clustered formation. Once it got into firing range, it immediately removed its disguise, and the enemy was gathered in the same firing area as planned. After the command ship in the center was shot down, the enemy ship on the right became the new target. Marida felt the mothership turn its cannons as according to plan from the back, and gathered her consciousness on

the enemy ship several hundred kilometers to the left. It was too distant, and as Marida's sights were blurry due to excessive fatigue, she did not know if she could reach there in time.

"Funnels!"

She endured the pain surging from her flank as she focused on controlling the funnels in her field of perception. The funnels—small automatic cannon pods, had dwindled in numbers to 7, and after being on standby near the enemy ship, they lit their thrusters and surrounded the last Musaka-class. There was only one chance. If she failed, the enemy would have a chance to counterattack, and the "Nahel Argama" would be attacked. Marida focused on the funnels that would escape her field, and glared at the Musaka-class, which was faltering after the command ship was shot down. She felt pain in her temples, her perception field was blurry, and her impression of the enemy ship was becoming vague.

"Hit them…!"

She held onto the ball-shaped control tightly, and eked out a voice from her gritted teeth. The 7 funnels released beams in unison from the tip of the cylinders, and Marida saw the engines of the Musaka-class being shot through from all directions. The explosion from within knocked the rear main cannon upwards, and the debris flying away due to the shockwave hit the funnels. Her perception field was engulfed by the incandescent light, and her consciousness was forced back into her body as she could spot a small flicker of light from far away.

Marida's strength seeped from her inadvertently straightened body, and she lowered her face. As she panted hard, her shoulders moving up and down, "Marker 15 "Musaka" is now silent." The sensor operator's voice rang from the wireless, and she turned the "Kshatriya" monoeye to the back.

(Marker 14 has a large breach. It seems they're retreating.)

(Turn the ship back and revert back to the original planned path. The mobile suit squadrons are not to relax. There are still enemies around.)

Captain Otto's voice rang. Marida directed the funnels back to her in a corner of her mind as she expanded the visual of the "Nahel Argama", located, 10,000km behind her, on the expanded window. The ship, which had already lost its portside catapult deck for a long time, had burn marks all over its white armor, and the right side of the wing-like

solar panels was snapped. One of the “Loto” assigned to the ship had ran out of ammunition, and Kwani’s severely damaged “Geara Zulu” was kept in the ship. Including the “Stark Jegan” that was shot down, one could say that they lost quite a lot of forces. In this current situation, the only units they could activate were a “ReZEL”, a “Loto”, and Evan’s “Geara Zulu”. They lost 50% of their fighting strength defending a single ship for more than 2 hours.

However, the damage they dealt to the enemy was definitely no less than 50%. Most of Tennyson’s fleet was drifting around due to the loss in control over the steering, and there was nothing that could prevent them from moving forward towards “Industrial 7”. *The “Unicorn Gundam”, Banagher, how are they now?* She opened her visor and wiped the sweat off her face, resting the back of her head on the headrest hidden in the Psycommu. As she endured the pulsating pain in her temples and intended to respond to Banagher’s thoughts, (Marida) a voice caused her eyes to widen.

(Good work. Return to the mothership first. We can’t replenish the funnels for now, but at least we can do some emergency repairs.)

It was Zinnerman. *Master,* she swallowed the words she nearly let out, “But the “Unicorn”…” Marida responded. She wondered when he entered the bridge, (That guy’s going to be fine.) but the familiar voice echoed, easing the pain in her temples slightly.

(He was caught in some strange weapon, but it seems he broke through it. He’s now fighting against an enemy unit.)

“An enemy unit…?”

(There doesn’t seem to be any other enemy unit from what we can see here. The “Nahel Argama” will immediately catch up. Return to the ship to rest. You’re still not in the best of conditions now, right?)

His empathy of her emotional toils were conveyed to her in a deliberate aloof tone meant to hide his embarrassment. His voice sounded no different from usual, but this was not the voice of someone who would remain amidst the darkness. She understood that Zinnerman had taken this step too, but at the same time, felt something was amiss with the one enemy unit, and looked towards the direction Banagher was at. There was still more than 1,000km till “Industrial 7”, and there was still an enemy standing in the “Unicorn Gundam” path, taking it on alone.

A chime rang as a flash appeared, causing the skin under the pilot suit to be covered in goosebumps. This light was intense yet cold, and

dissipated the heat Zinnerman's voice had brought as the stare from the mask caused her chest to freeze—

"It's him…?"

There was no time for hesitation. Amongst the battle up till this point, she still had yet to sense any pressure from that man. That man waited for the "Unicorn Gundam" to brea through the fleet, and conserved his strength instead of taking part in the battles. Marida sealed her visor and again grabbed onto the ball control. "I'll make a move first." Upon hearing her voice, "Marida…!" Zinnerman yelled.

"The "Unicorn" is fighting Full Frontal. That's not an enemy Banagher can win on his own."

(We'll send another unit over. You're already at your limits. Come back.)

"I'm going."

(Marida! Are you not going to listen to my orders?)

"I've already received your final command."

Follow your heart. (Marida…) The groan finished as Zinnerman was left speechless. Marida sensed his stare coming from 10km behind, and stepped on the pedal. The "Kshatriya" opened its binders and started to accelerate, fading away quickly on the expanded window of the "Nahel Argama". She also felt Zinnerman's stare become distant, and her body started to cool, but the feeling of being supported from behind by someone did not decrease in the slightest. She was driven by a strength more poignantly detected than before as the massive body of the "Kshatriya" advanced amidst the sea of debris.

Since I'm being supported, I too have to support others equally. Marida called back the funnels, now reduced to 6, back in, and hurriedly moved forward. The place she yearned to head to let out a flash, leaving an afterimage in her eyes. *Fire and ice is clashing,* she mumbled these words that subconsciously surfaced in her thoughts as she drove the "Kshatriya" to where the light was.

Part 8[edit]

The shield with the Zeon insignia engraved on it swung down, and the high-output particles released from the tips grazed past the body. The beams hide the rock debris passing by behind, causing the icy cold rocks to be scorched instantly.

The melted gravel cackled and exploded, and the 30m wide rock was

shattered into fragments. The scattered fragments hit the machine, causing Banagher to be a step slower in getting behind the enemy unit. The “Sinanju”, which had crushed the rock, immediately swung its shield and continued to slash at the “Unicorn Gundam” multiple times.

“Tch…!”

(Newtypes. That’s a one-off power created out of youth.)

Frontal’s voice rang as the 2 beam blades immediately closed in. The “Unicorn Gundam” managed to dodge in the nick of time, but the grenade launcher hidden behind the shield let out a flare, releasing a grenade the size of a drum barrel that exploded beside the “Unicorn Gundam”.

(It will not continue forever, and there’s no power to topple the situation. It is merely—)

The beam blades resembling that of large pliers swung down, and the savage blades were ostensibly the instantiation of if Frontal’s thoughts —

(The vibrancy of youth!)

The “Unicorn Gundam” had bent its upper body to the limit, and the yellow beams grazed past it as it sliced the space. Banagher used the backflip momentum of the machine to kick hard at the abdomen of the “Sinanju” while falling back.

“Don’t force the despair of a middle-aged man on me. I can’t stand it!”

The red machine took a hard uppercut kick at the abdomen, was sent flying, and staggered about. (Is that so…?) Frontal groaned, and the beam rifle in the right hand let out a flash. The “Unicorn Gundam”, which had lit its thrusters to back away just a moment ago, was scorched on the surface by the beam. A bazooka shot was fired along with the rifle shot, releasing a gaseous trail as it was fired along the same axis. Banagher did not have the time to aim as he fired the Beam Magnum.

The empty E-pack was ejected, and the thick beam, which used up all the energy from it, vaporized the bazooka. The “Sinanju” used the light of explosion as a cover to retreat to the void filled with clustered debris. The intermittent flashing lights of the thruster jets were hidden amidst the meteorites, and the motion sensors were unable to catch up. However, Banagher knew that he did not have to worry about losing the target, for the light released from the Psycoframe was brighter than that of the thruster flares, etched in his eyes. The rainbow light

released from the “Sinanju” machine from time to time would reveal its location.

“You should understand that this light is released from our hearts. The Psycoframes reflect our hearts.”

He was not a vessel. That man too had a heart that could interfere with others. The beam rifle had 7 shots left, the spare magazines included, and Banagher readied it at a position to fire as he too entered the clustered zone of debris.

“Both Newtypes and Oldtypes can resonate and understand each other. If we gather this light, we can even send the colonies out of the Milky Way. Humans have such a possibility—”

(And some have collapsed upon touching this possibility.)

The voice interrupting him rang from behind, and the red machine appeared from the shadow of the debris. Angelo’s face appeared in Banagher’s mind, causing the latter to react a fraction of a second late.

“Possibilities are chaotic. They take up an irregular form, and easily leads us to destruction. We can’t leave it alone.)

The two beam axes forming a shielded plier were attached, and the “Sinanju” swung its beam blades, assuming the form of a Naginata, slicing the debris apart. The beam rifle was kept at the waist, so there probably would not be any incoming flying projectile. Banagher immediately saw through this ruse, and wanted to pull his distance, but was shocked to see the shield raised. The bazooka launcher, which was hidden under the rifle just a while back, was moved behind it.

A flash appeared at the tip of the cannon, and a bazooka shot was fired. Banagher could not dodge in time, and hurriedly let the “Unicorn Gundam” charge right towards it. The G-force struck from behind, ostensibly popping the eyeballs out, and the overlaying G-force from the front caused the air sacs of the pilot suit to expand.

“The human heart can guide it to goodness, right!?”

Banagher eked out these words from his crushed lungs as he drew the beam saber. The bazooka shot, which had been advancing in a straight line, passed by the feet without being able to activate the approach sensor, and the “Sinanju”, looking a little hesitant, was right in front of his eyes. Banagher got into its clutches and swung the beam saber diagonally upwards.

The pink beams severed the cannon barrel poking from the shield. However, the “Sinanju” then did something beyond Banagher’s

expectation; it detached the disabled bazooka launcher and fired the Vulcan cannons on the head at it. The projectile left inside was ignited, and the flash of explosion covered Banagher's sights.

(The human heart is an enigma, and can't be controlled. That includes our wn.)

The "Sinanju" flew through this light and closed in on the "Unicorn Gundam". The Naginata and beam saber clashed, causing sparks to flash vibrantly around the two machines.

(Excessive hope will become a poison. As you said, Spacenoids aren't any different from Earthnoids. There's only those subjugating, and those being subjugated. The positions change from time to time, but human history lingers in this ever constant blueprint.)

The Psycoframe equipped on the "Sinanju" joints glowed, and the ball-shaped cockpit block in its abdomen vaguely appeared. Banagher had a vision of the mask, glowing in the rainbow light.

(While it is still a good thing for an occasional revolution to prompt a change in positions, it is too dangerous a notion to turn all humans into something beyond humanity. You have already attained a God-like power by being united with that machine; for that, I can't allow you to reach that "Laplace Box".)

"I'm human! Just like you! Just an ordinary human born from the interaction between humanity and the world!"

Banagher repelled the icy voice seeping into his pores as he roared back, turning around to block the beam saber. The beam blades were knocked aside, pushing the two machines apart. The "Sinanju" hurriedly backtracked.

"There's nothing that won't change. Myself, the world, we all will change according to our hearts. The history you talk about is just the thing you see!"

(But some are uneasy about that uncertainty. Those Oldtypes never sought after the truth, ust an answer that's easy to understand.)

The "Sinanju" broke the Naginata into two axes, and accelerated from near Banagher's feet. It rolled to the side to dodge the Beam Magnum shot, and swung the superheated axe blade at the machine that was on the same height, and Banagher managed to swallow back the cry he nearly released.

(It is a mistake to think that everyone can be on the same level as you, and imposing it on others is an act of arrogance. Just show the results

of it to them. You can already destroy someone just by touching them; there is no way you can remain with ‘everyone’.)

“Such nonsensical logic…!”

Banagher kept the beam rifle in the mount on the back, and drew the beam saber on the shoulder with his emptied right hand. Two beam sabers took the strikes from the two beam axes, and the clashing beams let out continual sparks. Perhaps Frontal too had the fear of being burned by his reflexes. After slashing at each other for several seconds, the two machines pulled away from each other at the same time; the “Sinanju” recovered a little faster, and got behind the “Unicorn Gundam”.

(To continue to plead change with those that do not want to, or to get an unchanging outcome? I chose the latter, and became a vessel.)

The “Sinanju” connected the hilts of its beam axes together, and again attacked with the Naginata. Banagher turned around, swung the beam saber, and managed to catch the Naginata blade in time.

(A vessel simply needs a will in it, calling for the collective consciousness of the Spacenoids. There’s no need for any possibility, just an accepted outcome.)

“How can humans become vessels!? That’s just your cry from despair…!”

The other beam saber immediately swung over, and the crossing beams parried the Naginata aside. The “Sinanju” was knocked back by the interfering lights that exploded, and gave an opening. *Chance,* Banagher tossed aside all other thoughts as he let the “Unicorn Gundam” leap over.

“What caused you to be like this? What’s your source of despair!?”

The right manipulator kept the beam saber and reached its hand forward. Banagher did not think too much as the “Unicorn Gundam” psycoframe increased in brightness, while the opened fingers released a wave. The invisible ‘wave’ engulfed the phosphorus rainbow light, and seemed to surround the “Sinanju”.

The “Sinanju” joints were stiff, and remained still as it was seemingly restrained. *I’m not going to kill anyone again. I’m going to pull out the vengeful thoughts in you.* Banagher reached his hand out, and the “Unicorn Gundam” too moved its right arm along with him and grabbed the “Sinanju” head.

“Remove your mask! Full Frontal…!”

The Psycoframes lights continued to clash, intertwine and fuse together. It was the same feeling as that with Marida and Angelo. Their thoughts resonated, forming a different thought process—but before Banagher’s consciousness could drift from his physical body, he saw Frontal’s lips curl into a smirk. The smiling smirks became a vortex that slowly spun about, pulling in Banagher’s consciousness—

The light disappeared.

Nothing.

Emptiness.

There was nothing in this void.

There was no light, no darkness, just an existence filled with nothing. There was nothing to resonate, to interact about. Is this the inside of the man who deemed himself to be a vessel—?

Impossible, there has to be something. A source that cause this man to be twisted into despair; a memory that can be a nursery for vengeance. Banagher floated in this emptiness, where all sense of direction was null, and his presence uncertain, seeking Frontal’s thoughts. However, there was a darkness surging from nowhere, ostensibly responding to his determined thoughts in assuming that there had to be something, and recognized the dark space with billions of stars in it.

Infinity, this is the only existence that could describe the term clearly. It was impossible to gauge such a scale using human strength. Even a small step within the Milky Way could take millions of years. The daily common sense, having been often locked within a cabinet, accompanied a sense of realism, surging towards Banagher, causing him to feel a suffocating terror.

Suffocating in an infinite space? Such nonsensical words. However, humans as individuals only had a activity time of less than 100 years, and definitely wo;; not be able to leave the Solar System even till death, let alone the Milky Way. The Celestial Sphere between Earth and the Moon will at most be expanded to Mars or Jupiter—and this is merely an absolutely tiny space in comparison to outer space, yet they cannot take a single step out of it. They are restricted by the constraints of the physical bodies, bounded by the concept of Relativity they discovered, and their lives end without them being able to look into the abyss of space. They can only reach their hands towards where they could reach, and once every remaining planet is devoured

and destroyed, even their existence as a species will undoubtedly come to an end. Perhaps, in the face of infinity, humanity can only suffocate.

Can they fly out of this Solar System if they gathered the light in the Psyco field? If they were real Newtypes, can they really show that there is an existence beyond that of the light? This abyss however will be swallowed whole together with that possibility. No matter where they flew, there is an endless darkness with nothing around, and they will quiver in fear before they could fly. There was nothing in this space, just infinity, and no other highly-sentient lifeform they could meet. Even if there is, they ismerely be the remnant of a civilization that was long extinct, or a budding lifeform that would be discovered in the future. In terms of the depths of space, the lifespan of a species, from birth to extinction, will merely be just an instant. There had never been a miracle in this space where a moment can be met with another.

Humanity is just one of those instances—just a fleeting instance created in eternity. The meaning of existences, or what used to be the meaning, will be born and gone before they can reach anyone else. Possibilities are merely possibilities, a temporarl comfort amidst the loneliness of millions of years. Even now, they continue to progress slowly towards their end, giving off heat in this void.

It was cold. He could feel the heat being robbed from his body, his existence being devoured from nothingness. It was futile, no matter what he did, Audrey's warmth, his father's wish, his mother's ideals, they were all just a fleeting illusion amongst the billions of them. There was already a decided ending, and no matter what he did—

—Only humanity has God.

A 'voice' floated in the emptiness, where he was the only one present. The thoughts residing in his inner heart caused a 'voice' to be released from something formed by his existence.

—The inner god called possibilities.

The 'voice' became a light. Right, the original creator had once said, 'let there be light'. Words will create light, and thoughts would recognize phenomena. The intellectual presences are the only ones who can recognize this blankly existing space as the world. Humanity will bring meaning to the universe's existence, through their power and gentleness.

—Don't look at the emptiness. It won't respond to you, and will swallow you.

The light gradually got bigger, and the warm wave swept aside the frozen nothingness. The ‘voice’ he recognized, Marida’s thoughts, were supporting his existence from within. He reached his hand out for the light.

—Don’t be swallowed by him. You’re human, unlike us created beings. Take back your own words.

The dazzling light took the form of a human, and Banagher held her hand. *That’s how it is,* the warmth of skin came from the palm. *Keep saying it no matter what happens,* the only line she ever taught Banagher was born in his heart, expanding throughout the entire void. Even if the future would be shattered, even if we’re just existences born from nothingness, and will return back to nothingness—

“EVEN SO…!”

The shout became a power released from the “Unicorn Gundam” arm. The belt of light from the Psyco field exploded, and Banagher witnessed the “Sinanju” being knocked aside.

(This power…?)

Frontal’s voice rang through the fluttering light for the first time. Banagher returned back to reality, shook his head, and looked around at the rainbow light surrounding the machine. The “Unicorn Gundam” was not the only one releasing light, and it was not a light formed with the “Sinanju”. It was a light formed by the resonating of a nearby existence, dragging him back from the emptiness.

The “Sinanju”, having been knocked knocked, used its AMBAC to balance itself, and drew the beam rifle on its waist with its left hand. Banagher’s thoughts had yet to catch up with the developments as he looked back at the barrel without defending himself. In an instant however, several funnels ripped through the light in the Psyco field, crossing in his sights.

(Your opponent is me!)

The screaming voice rang through the wireless radio, and the funnels fired in unison. The “Sinanju” retreated as it swung its beam Naginata, blocking away the crashing beams at the last moment. Two shots then came in, and once the retreating “Sinanju” retreated from his sights, the massive body of the “Kshatriya” flew by the front of the “Unicorn Gundam”. The two Beam Gatling Guns equipped on its right arm were releasing thick beam pellets, chasing the “Sinanju” as it zigzagged about.

“Miss Marida!”

(Go on first, Banagher. I’ll handle this guy.)

The “Kshatriya” was releasing a rainbow phosphorus light as it opened its 4 binders, and drew its beam saber to slash at the “Sinanjju”. The “Sinanju” spun its Naginata, which took down a funnel, spun back again to beam the beam saber, and immediately flipped. The red machine took advantage of the “Kshatriya” lack of a right hand as it calculated its blind spot, and flew behind it. the funnels followed, and the beams crossed. The “Kshtatriya” predicted the “Sinanju” escape path, and a beam saber appeared from a hidden arm as three beam sabers flashed about, ripping through the darkness.

Sparks continued to fly between the two units, and the beam saber battle repeated itself back and forth as the two machine dazzled and dashed through space. The battle seemed even at this point, but Marida and the “Kshatriya” were completely worn out from the battles they had up till this point. Banagher found that the Psyco field was decreasing in brightness, and let the “Unicorn Gundam” pursue the two machines. If he could trigger a resonance with the “Kshatriya”, perhaps they could force the “SInanju” to retreat. He approached the two machines as he could not provide supporting fire or even intervene, but before he could, the funnels flew right by him. (You’re in the way! Hurry up and go!) Marida’s voice rang. The “Sinanju” however ignored the funnels, which had the chance to surround it, and swung the Naginata, which grazed past the “Kshtriya” head.

“But…!”

(Hurry to “Industrial 7” and find the “Box”! Right now…!)

A brighter spark exploded, and the “Kshatriya” melted hidden arm floated in space. “Miss Marida!” Banagher yelled out, and wanted to intervene between the two machines, (Follow the instructions, Banagher!) However, he heard another voice from the wireless communicator,

(As long as we get the “Box”…hurry…)

The interrupted voice caused Banagher to imagine Zinnerman’s face in his mind as it blew through the cockpit. Banagher affirmed at the laser communication indicator had reverted back to normal for the time behind, he turned around to look at the back. (Hurry on, Banagher.) A spirited voice then rang in his ears.

(We’ll catch up…to Marida’s…)

The static noise got more intense, and the words signal lost flickered. Though the space debris was obstructing, the “Nahel Argama” was already close enough for the laser communicator to capture a signal.”Audrey…!” Banagher shouted into the interrupted wireless communicator as he looked around at the visuals synchronized with the main camera. The expanded window activated on its own, and the familiar sight of a white ship appeared in the other end of space, but at that moment, (That’s fine too.) An extremely clear voice rang through the wireless communicator in his helmet.

(The monster you created is looking for you.)

Despite being in the midst of an uninterrupted sword clash, Frontal said so without any panting. *I know about you,* that voice told

Banagher this. *This man saw my inner heart when I was being swallowed by the emptiness.* Banagher however did not have much time to ask about the meaning behind his words, (Banagher!) as Marida's angry voice reached his eardrums, prompting him to step on the pedal.

The "Unicorn Gundam" lit its main thruster and accelerated away from the battlefield. *Even if you know you will regret it in the future, you have to move on*—the clashing lights of battle from the "Kshatriya" and the "Sinanju" behind were telling him this and driving him on as he accelerated the machine without looking back. The NT-D signal vanished, and the full psycoframe shrank back, no longer glowing. The moveable armor was hidden in the exposed frame, the facemask covered the dual-eye sensor, and the "Unicorn" reverted to its lone horn stat as it flew amidst the Shoal Space.

The time was GMT 1045. The battle had lasted for 2½ hours, and he should be close enough to see it. Banagher activated the astronomy observation software as he called out the coordinate data of the Laplace Program. The red words <La+> were flickering, and the window was automatically expected. He looked around, surveying the shapes of the debris as he searched for his target, and after countless 'not a match' signs showing on the window, he finally caught sight of a flashing 'match' sign at an object far away.

The CG correction began, and the space colony visual appeared on the window. The large cylinder was over 20km in length and 6km in diameter, but the block noise was covering, preventing its details from being seen. One could tell from the difference in color however that one-third of the cylinder was covered by the 'wheel', and at the front of it was the colony builder attached to it—this is the unique shape of the "Magallanica", dubbed the 'snail', and Banagher, who had stayed there for 8 months, could identify it immediately.

"I'm back…"

The sealed colony at the front, floating silently in the Shoal Space region, had swallowed the secret of the "Laplace Box" that toppled the world. Banagher subconsciously clenched his fists as he stared at the identifiable "Industrial 7" on the expanded window, knowing that it was the place. Everything began here, the "Unicorn", Audrey, Cardeas, Zinnerman and Marida, he met them all here, was taken in by the "Nahel Argama", and finally—

An icy killing intent instantly arrived, causing any further thoughts to dissipate. Banagher instinctively pushed the control stick down and raised the barrel of the beam rifle. The killing intent was gathered in

front of the “Unicorn” as it turned around, breaking away from its path; it flashed in the form of a little light, and then grazed the “Unicorn” by the side in the form of a thick torrent of mega particles.

“What…!?”

—I found you, “Unicorn”!!

A ‘voice’ then came flying in, and he felt goosebumps upon thinking of the term ‘malicious intent’. Another beam was fired—and after dodging this Beam Magnum-like energy block, Banagher too fought back while squeezing the trigger. The similarly thick beam crossed through space, and the radioactive light from the beam shone on a nearby machine. A black armor appeared in the pitch black space.

What looked like a multi-bladed antenna from the front was giving off a golden light from the forehead of the machine merged into the eternal night. It was the black “Unicorn”, the “Banshee”, and the pilot within…

“Ensign Riddhe…!?”

Banagher did not wonder why that was the case. *The monster you created*—all he thought about was that the curse Frontal had laid on him took a physical form, and let the “Unicorn” race over to deal with the next wave of attacks. The “Banshee” too flipped its black frame around as the eyes hidden under the facemask glowed. The two Unicorn-types faced off for the 3rd time, at the place where it all began and will end, flashing their thruster flares as they looked for blind spots.

Part 9[edit]

“How…? Why!?”

There was a wail-like voice heard, “What’s the matter?” Otto was the first to respond, and Mineva stared at the communication console from beyond his shoulder. “RX-0, Banagher! Answer me!” Ensign Mihiro shouted as the back profile of her putting her hand on her head entered Mineva’s sights.

“Y-You’re saying Ensign Riddhe’s attacking you!? What’s going on!?”

It seemed Otto’s voice had yet to register in her ears as she worked to adjust the angle of the laser communication. Her voice was completely different from before, and Mineva heard her own heart jump violently. “It’s Ensign Riddhe…!?” Otto too raised his voice.

“It means Londo Bell has arrived? Where’s the “Unicorn”?”

“Too much debris, the sensors can’t catch up. It seems to be fighting a

single enemy unit."

The sensor operator responded. If the optical sensors could not catch up to their movements, there was no reason why the laser communication could. Mineva stared at Mihiro's back as the latter frantically adjusted the frequencies, seeing the voice that could have been picked up before the battle occurred. "Ensign Mihiro, the report, first!" Liam growled, causing Mineva's shoulders to jump. "Y-Yes…!" Mihiro instinctively straightened her back, and turned her still unrecovered expression at Liam,

"It's still uncertain. All I hear is Ensign Riddhe, and the "Banshee" attacking or something…"

The pale face let out this voice, causing Mineva's heart to race again, her fingertips trembling violently as she shuddered this time. As she looked up at the main screen in shock, "The "Banshee"…?" Otto murmured. "It's the second "Unicorn"." Aaron interjected,

"Why is it at such a place…wasn't it destroyed on Earth?"

"That should be the case. When it sank together with the "Garuda"…"

But Zinnerman, now at the cannon operator seat, did not witness it personally, and he hushed himself as he turned his pale face to the front. Mineva felt her body, seated on the commander seat, shivering along with her bones. Nobody present knew what happened to Riddhe after he landed on Earth, and even if they did, they would not be able to link those events with this current situation. Mineva wondered about these things only she knew of as her eyes landed on her palms, covered in the normal suit fabric.

These were not the hands to hold—these hands had made a decision to shake off the hand that was reached over to her. The "Garuda" was fading fast, and he had that anguished expression of being seemingly cut off from the world. He bore the destiny of his family to prevent the "Box" from being opened…and more. He wanted to grab the hand he did not manage to grab, and made a pact with the black "Unicorn"—

This was an instinctive notion, and not born out of thought. *If this is the case, I'll have to bear all responsibility.* Mineva felt that she could not just idle around at this place, but her mind could not think of what to do. As she looked around the bridge, Lieutenant Commander Conroy's voice rang through the wireless communicator, (ECOAS 920 notifying the Bridge, Base Jabber is ready to launch), causing her eyes to widen.

(We're ready to launch anytime. Please notify us of the situation.)

“This is the Captain. The situation’s sticky now. Remain on standby for now.”

(New “Sleeves” reinforcements?)

“Not sure.” Otto gave a vague answer. The ECOAS squad, which was planned to reach “Industrial 7” first, had finished its preparations to launch. The SFS was dragged to the deck, ferrying the mobile suit called the “Loto”, and the armed personnel were definitely on standby inside. Once Mineva thought about this her body took action on its own, and she stealthily left the commander seat. “Has the mobile suit squadron reached the “Kshtriya” yet!? Marida’s still wounded!!” “They’re rushing over now!!” With her back facing Zinnerman and Liam’s shouts, Mineva left the bridge without meeting anyone.

She still had no idea of what she could do. Perhaps her action would cause the situation to be more chaotic, but her heart was filled with the notion to stop them, and with bated breath, she stepped off the corridor floor, got into the elevator, and pressed the button leading to the mobile suit deck level. (If the “Unicorn” is being held up, I guess we’ll have to hurry to “Industrial 7” first. If we don’t move fast, the “Rewloola” is going to catch up to us.) Conroy’s anxious voice rang through the wireless communicator, causing her tense skin to shudder.

Part 10[edit]

Though they had predicted the course that would be taken, it was truly by luck that they could meet up so early. 30 minutes had passed since he left the Base Jabber, and there was still another 12 minutes worth of booster fuel in the machine. Riddhe equipped the Hyper bazooka on the back to the left hand, forming a dual-wielding combination with the beam rifle in the right hand, and fired the bazooka at the white machine caught on the reticule visual. The fired 380mm shot spun as it charged forward, and the hundreds of metal balls within the projectile exploded out.

At that instant, the “Unicorn”, which had been flaring its thrusters, hurriedly spun around and passed the “Banshee” by its feet. Riddhe immediately fired the Vulcan cannons, but he knew this would be insufficient as suppressing fire. The thruster flares immediately disappeared, and the “Unicorn” spun around using the AMBAC as it hid in the shadows of the debris. An invisible intent climbed up Riddhe’s back, causing goosebumps to crawl up his skin.

“It’s fast…!”

He was clearly not in destroy mode, but Riddhe could not track him at

all. Riddhe himself let the machine zigzag about, looking around as he searched for the enemy as he felt anxious about the pressure he bore. The psycommu monitor clearly showed that it was running normally, but there was no response from the NT-D. *What's not enough? It should be able to activate upon facing the* monster *that can control the machine like that.*

(Stop it, Ensign Riddhe!)

At that instant, the monster's voice ripped through Riddhe's ears, causing his hands on the control sticks to shudder slightly.

(You haven't seen the situation clearly. We've no reason to fight here!)

"Shut up!"

Riddhe pointed the beam rifle at the direction where the wireless signal came from, and squeezed the trigger. The mega-particles, with 4 times the usual power, raced through the sea of debris, and for an instant, shone upon the white machine hidden amidst the rocks. Once its lone horn showed some reflected light, Riddhe immediately raised the Hyper Bazooka again.

"You guys oppose the Federation and intend to approach the "Laplace Box". As a Federation officer, a member of the Marcenas family, I have a duty to stop you!"

A meaningless emptiness caused his face to contort as he squeezed the trigger. The bazooka projectile dragged a gaseous trail and hit a rock directly. (You're lying, Mr Riddhe!) However, Banagher's cry came from a completely different direction.

(You're not here to do such a thing. Hurry up and leave the "Banshee"! That machine's too dangerous!)

The wireless signal clearly showed where it was from, informing Riddhe that the "Unicorn" had moved from behind him to above him. Having lost sight of the machine however, "Stop messing around!" he looked around and growled as he turned the "Banshee" towards the origin of the voice.

"Then why did I come here!?"

"It's because of Audrey, right!? You piloted that machine to bring her back…!"

The incoming voice caused the seed of shame to break apart and fade away. Riddhe's blood boiled, but his body was numbed by the words he could not comprehend, and he merely watched the "Unicorn" pass

by him from above as he forgot to attack.

"…Yeah you're just a kid. So young that you don't understand what you can and can't say…"

His uncontrollable rage contorted his lips, becoming that of a self-depreciating smirk. The immature-looking face he saw on the "Nahel Argama" faced through his mind, and his shoulders were humping as he seemingly laughed. *Right, he's just a kid. Even if the "Unicorn" is so almighty, that guy hasn't changed since that. He'll just show that immature self-conciousness of his, but he can't imagine his existence threatening others severely—*

"And such a guy's actually called a Newtype, messing with the world irresponsibility…! I won't forgive you!"

His rage was embodied in the form of a light from the Beam Magnum, grazing the "Unicorn". The eyes under the "Banshee" facemask flickered, and he leapt into space, swinging the beam tonfa on the right hand. He stepped off a piece of debris floating in orbit, closed in on the retreating "Unicorn", and spotted the beam lights from both sides through the anti-glare filter. The "Unicorn" frame easily dodged the slashes that that kept coming as it retreated back, (MR Riddle, please stop!) Banagher's voice rang again.

(The "Unicorn" and "Banshee" are attracting each other now. I can't hold back any longer…!)

"You mean you're holding back now!? How much do you want do humiliate me!!"

After firing the last shot, he threw the Hyper Bazooka away. The "Unicorn" dodged got to the bottom, and hid its white frame hid amidst the clustred space debris. A loud clank rang in a corner of Riddhe's mind as he stepped on the pedal to pursue Banagher. The light from the Beam Magnum flashed by the accelerating "Banshee", hitting a piece of space debris directly, and the shattered rock rained on the machine in the form of pellets.

"How…!"

(Now's not the time for this! Frontal…!)

The splattering sounds on the machine were mixed with Banagher's drowned voice. *He just used the remaining space debris to attack me —so that means he can shoot me down directly if he wants to? Riddhe felt a chill in regards to this difference in skill level, and gritted his teeth as he stared at the psycommu monitor on the display board. The NT-D*

still would not activate, and the "Banshee" continued to remain in slumber as it merely covered him in the form of a machine.

"Give me power, "Banshee"…!"

If there's a need, I can sell you my useless soul and body. As he subconsciously muttered it, a high-frequency wave resembling a metal resonance again shook his eardrums, and his temples felt a sharp pain as the 'voice' rang.

—Right behind, Riddhe.

The 'voice' flowed in the form of a golden light, piercing through the skull. He instinctively reacted and moved the machine, and the "Banshee" turned to the back, firing its Beam Magnum. The turnaround attack glided through the darkness and destroyed the rock, causing the scattered shrapnel to scatter in front of him like fireworks. The scatters shrapnel surrounded the "Unicorn", causing it to stumble within.

"Who is it!?"

Riddhe put his hand on his helmet as he looked around. He had yet to realize the true identity of this voice, but he first managed to detect the "Unicorn" flying away with a trail of light following it, and let the "Banshee" pursue, ostensibly drawn to it. The white machine again got below to his feet, kicked off a piece of space debris, and flew up from behind—despite it escaping from his sights, Riddhe could clearly sense the trajectory the "Unicorn" took.

"I can see it…!"

Riddhe let the machine glide over to that path, and swung the beam saber he was wielding in the left hand. The "Unicorn" too drew its beam saber and blocked it at the last moment, causing the beam saber to let out a flash, and the clashing particle sparks spread explosively. Riddhe saw colors come out from the intense white flash, a rainbow prism light flowing about. This light surrounded the "Banshee" and the "Unicorn", causing their Psycoframes to glow, and the phosphorus light to be released.

(A Psyco field…!?)

Banagher's falter came in the form of a wave. As the light seeped into the cockpit, Riddhe swung the beam saber upwards from its entwined position. The "Unicorn" hand wielding the beam saber was parried away, and the unit staggered backwards, making an opening. Having predicted that the "Unicorn" would light its burners to balance itself and escape, the "Banshee" immediately raise its arm squeezed the trigger

of the Beam Magnum.

“Got you!”

The thick beam grazed past the “Unicorn”, and it was knocked away while using the shield to block the scattered particles. Riddhe could see his fear, hesitation, whatever he planned to do, and hallucinated the light surrounding the machine becoming his limbs, devouring the “Unicorn”. *I won’t lose sight of it again.* His senses were expanded to 360 degrees, and he could even detect the heat released from the “Unicorn”.

—Right, that’s right. Corner him.

A pressure, either a gust or a light, passed through his temple, causing the ‘voice’ to ring, and Riddhe’s eyes to widen.

“Psycowaves…!? Alberto!?”

The thoughts were filled with malice, and there was no doubt Alberto had arrived on this battlefield as well. He could sese the latter’s thoughts synchronizing with him, expanding his senses. The message from before—supply materials, was this what he was referring to? Riddhe’s realistic thoughts were overpowered by the distracting light as he looked for the “Unicorn” that was flying around his senses. Alberto’s thoughts had caught sight of that machine attempting to hide in the blind spots, and were conveyed to Riddhe’s thoughts. His hatred and malice exploded in Riddhe, causing the latter’s heart to pump and race.

—The “Unicorn” is now a prisoner of the Psyco field. You can win once you draw the power of the “Banshee”.

The ‘voice’ reached him. There was no time to consider why there was a voice, and neither was there a need to; Riddhe kept hearing his wild heartbeat, ostensibly about to break apart. The “Banshee” Psycoframe released a resonating sound, and the anomaly, the “Unicorn”, was leaping in the gap between the two thoughts. The machine that turned his fate haywire was a monster that snatched Mineva away and wanted to activate the “Box” again.

“If it wasn’t around…!”

His heart was breaking apart as it reached its limit, and a hot mucosa gushed out. It seeped out from his body and flowed to every corner of the machine, and the “Banshee” let out a beast-like growl. (You mustn’t, Mr Riddhe!) Banagher’s yell however was just a noise mixed amidst the machine’s roar. The NT-D sign gave a blood red sign, and

Riddhe imagined it to be an extension of his limbs.

The machine's armor slid as he imagined, and the and the frame let out a golden glow as the limbs were stretched. The facemask was pulled down, and the rooster crown-shaped horn expanded to the side, forming a V-shaped multi-bladed antenna, glowing like a lion's mane.

"This is the "Gundam"…!"

It took less than 0.5 seconds to transform into the destroy mode—yet it felt so long. His senses were stretched along with the machine, and his nerves were stretched till the fingertips of the manipulators. His body felt heavy, seemingly lying in fluid, but he understood that his concept of time had been distorted. In this world, where a second is dragged to 10 times the usual length, even the air felt viscous. The separation of the mind and the physical body had pressurized the flesh and bones that could only move at normal speed.

However, there was no need to panic, for he did not need a physical body to control the "Banshee" in this state. The Intention Automatic System and the Psycoframe, which would respond to the pilot's will, would smoothly allow him to operate this machine that had obtained the appearance of a "Gundam". Riddhe tweaked his nerves, which were connected to the machine, and let the "Banshee" charge towards the "Unicorn". The machine closed in rapidly, giving off golden phosphorus light as the silhouette of the black "Gundam" appeared in the eternal night.

A wail-like voice rang, and the pure white armor of the "Unicorn" let out a red phosphorus light. It avoided the "Banshee" slash and flipped backwards, expanded its frame to obtain a "Gundam" appearance, and looked back at him. Its transformation, together with the drawing of the beam rifle, merely looked too slow. Before the Beam Magnum was fired, Riddhe flew up immediately and jumped onto the "Unicorn Gundam" head.

"Too slow!"

The knee, with its psycoframe exposed, kicked at the "Unicorn Gundam" head. The latter machine was sent sprawling back, slamming into the space debris as it slowed down. *Watch me now, Alberto. I'll use these hands of mine to rip that monster which denied our existence.* The reticule was aimed at the spinning fluorescent lights of the "Unicorn Gundam", and Riddhe's finger squeezed the trigger of the beam rifle.

"I got you, Banagher!!"

The emptied E-pack was ejected, and a torrent of mega particles raced out. A violent colorful light ripped through the light belt of psyco field, dragging a long trail in space.

Part 11[edit]

“You mustn’t, Riddhe!”

Mineva inadvertently shouted as a battleship-like cannon beam grazed past, causing the control room of the Type-94 Base Jabber to be shaken violently. The attachments at the back rattled, and Mineva’s body shrank in fear as she was nearly thrown off her seat. (It’s a Unicorn-type!) She heard a voice from the wireless radio in her helmet.

(It’s a black unit. I can see the glowing phenomenon from before. It looks like both units are in destroy mode.)

The report from the “Loto” driver, seated at the platform “The “Gundams” are fighting…?” caused Conroy to murmur in response. Mineva stood up from the rear seat at the back, and turned her body to lean over to the back profile of the steering seat, and stared at the aurora-like light floating outside the window. The belt of light ostensibly surrounded the two Unicorn-type machines, forming a ‘forcefield’ ranging tens of kilometers, and looked as large as a fist from here, a cocoon of light fluttering around. The light was as faint as the afterimage left in the eyes, and it felt surreal even though it was floating in front of her eyes. However, the occasional beam lights were ever so sharp, causing Mineva to recognize that both machines were fighting.

The light in the Psyco field was as what she saw on Earth. The clash between the two Unicorn-type machines would create a demonic light that would absorb human life. It had been more than 10 minutes since she managed to convince Conroy and leave the “Nahel Argama” with the advance party. In the face of this development, which was proceeding in the worst direction, Mineva felt a sense of despair, fearing that she could no longer prevent any further developments. The furor surging from amidst the light was that intense. It was several hundred kilometers away, but the clashing ‘presences’ of the duo was strong enough to numb the skin.

“It’s too dangerous to approach them, Leader. If we rush into the battle between the two “Unicorns”…”

Lieutenant Garity, holding the control joysticks, probably felt the same thing as he said so with a pale face. The Base Jabbers and the two Lotos” fastened on it in tank form were powerless in combat, and one could imagine the results if it charged into the battlefield. Mineva deduced that Conroy would make the decision to retreat, “Just a little closer, please!” and interrupted their conversation, “Princess…!” Conroy gave her a chiding look, but she did not look back as she stared at the flickering light outside the window.

“The psyco field is expanding. If we get close, I may be able to pass on my words.”

“But that light’s like an energy forcefield. The Base Jabber will be crushed if it goes in.”

“I shall go even if I am alone. Please lend me a portable burner.”

Mineva said unflinchingly. “What nonsense…!” and Conroy sounded furious as he lambasted back. Though she had quickly disobeyed the

agreement to obey him at all costs, Mineva had no other choice. She leaned forward from her seat, and stared at Conroy with that queenly expression of hers.

“Both sides are related to us. If they sense my existence—”

A beam again fizzled by, and the shockwaves impacted the control room. The co-pilot stopped the ringing siren, and Garity turned his head back to shout at Conroy, “We’re leaving!” Conroy stared at Mineva’s unwavering expression silently, giving a piercing stare that reminded others of their moniker ‘Manhunters’. Soon after, his lips broke into a smile, and he lowered his head slightly.

“…So that, at length, it grew a single shaft upon it's brow and to a virgin came—and dwelled in her and in her silvered glass.”

He muttered this to himself, his eyes could not be seen as it was covered by the helmet. This was one of the verses from the poem of the unicorn; Mineva was secretly surprised that this man actually memorized this line, and could not think of a reason why the man did so as she stared at the ECOAS’ Commander’s sidelong face. Conroy immediately lifted his head and hid the smile on his lips. “Proceed forward as it is, 40 seconds.” He said firmly.

“When the countdown reaches zero, turn away and pass through the light field towards the target space.”

Garity turned back, clearly wanting to give a look of protest in his eyes for an instant. However, he looked back at the console, “Roger that” and said so stoically. “Begin countdown.” The moment the co-pilot said this, Mineva looked at Conroy sidelong, and the latter looked outside the window. “We’ll head back if the situation’s bad.” He said.

“Please call them back. Perhaps you might be able to tame those wild horses.”

He looked back at her once he said this. Without a doubt, the expression this man showed was that of one who could only rely on his own instincts and escape from death time and time again. Perhaps he had this intention when he made the decision to let her come along and leave the “Nahel Argama”. Mineva accepted this thinking with some skepticism as she leaned her back on the sturdy backrest. She closed her eyes and gathered her thoughts on the flashes flickering under her eyelids, and the control room jerked a little, probably due to a hit by a small piece of debris or something. “10 seconds have passed”. She heard this notification from the co-pilot.

—RIddhe, it’s me. Mineva Zabi.

She called out, her fists on her lap clenched tightly. The engine sounds of the Base Jabber suddenly faded away, and she felt the sensation of the icy vacuum permeating through the insides of her normal suit.

—I empathize with your pain. Do not do this again. You will hurt yourself more the more you fight.

—You caused this.

The hideous 'voice' took the form of a pressure, and resonated with the anguished eyes she saw when she rejected his hand. Mineva felt her body, drifting with her consciousness, shudder a little.

—You rejected me. I told you not to leave me alone, but you abandoned me.

That crazed, euphoric thought process was forcing its existence upon Mineva's. He knew he was suffering, but was unable to stop, and one soul was exerting violence on another, revealing a childish directness and cruelty in the thoughts.

—It's like Mom. Everyone only cares about someone. Nobody cares about me."

"Riddhe, that is…!"

The words she shouted unconsciously caused her lips to move in reality. *That is not true* she wanted to continue subconsciously, but she realized she had yet to reach her hand out. She was simply approaching, unwilling to reciprocate, for she knew these were the hands she should not raise.

—Are you here to make fun of me!?

The agitated voice became a needle piercing her body. *No,* Mineva wanted to form her thoughts, but they were unable to become words, and her physical body was writhing in pain. "Your Highness…!?" Conroy yelled as he turned around in shock.

"Riddhe…!"

She barely managed to rein in her thoughts that were nearly shredded and repulsed, and her physical body reached its trembling hand forward as she sat on the chair. A ferocious light glowed from the psyco field as her fingers missed, and a gale strong enough to shake her existence struck her.

Part 12[edit]

A familiar cry rang in Marida's mind, causing her palm resting on the

ball-shaped grip to numb. There was an existence reverberating her senses, telling her that the two Unicorn-type machines were clashing, charging between them without any sign of defense.

“Princess…?”

It’s too reckless. The moment she instinctively looked back, a ring of light exploded in front of her, and a shredding-like pain pummeled on her together with the jolts. She however ignored the pain as she persisted with gripping onto the controls, maneuvering her machine to a direction where none of the explosion lights could be seen. With the explosions of the sliced funnels in the background, the “Sinanju” closed in.

(Do you have the time to look around?)

Frontal’s voice came, and the beam Naginata was swung at the “Kshatriya” right hand right when he grazed by. The two beam Gatling guns equipped on the forehead were melted and sliced apart, and Marida detached them before they exploded. She turned around, seeing the fireball engulf them, and let the last funnel turn towards the “Sinanju”. This automatic cannon pod was unable to return to its mother unit in time, and its battery was almost depleted; once moved like a bullet as it darted towards the “Sinanju” with its back turned on it.

The Mega particles were released from the funnel, which had yet to miss a single shot, but the “Sinanju” barely dodged to the left at the last moment. *Just as I expected.* She redirected the funnel and let it charge towards the “Sinanju”, and it became a tracking missile as it activated its thrusters, crossing paths with the red machine. The red machine however slowly raised its beam rifle, and the grenade launcher equipped under the barrel let out a gaseous trail.

The funnel collided with the fired shot head on, and turned into a fireball, the “Sinanju” using its light to hide its whereabouts. Marida scanned through the space, littered with debris, through her naked eyes, for she was unable to sense him. He was adept at hiding his killing intent completely, probably a result of him not thinking of humans as anything, ostracizing them from his world.

(I suppose your funnels are exhausted, Lieutenant Marida.)

The presence had gotten behind her without warning, and there was an icy voice. The scatter mega particle guns in the binders were destroyed, and the “Kshatriya” had no weapon other than its beam sabers. Marida turned her machine towards the source of Frontal’s voice, as according to the wireless communicator, and scanned the

frigid space filled with debris.

(An enhanced human is supposed to have a portion of its mind blanked out so as to synchronize with machines…how curious. There seems to be something inside that blankness, causing your senses to be dulled.)

A voice, filled with pity for its own kind, seeped out from the shadows of the space debris, causing goosebumps in her as it quivered her cheeks. This empty man filled his emptiness with vengeance, and unabashedly proclaimed this was the collective will of the Spacenoids; his voice continued on—

(It is a pity. You could have been a vessel yourself.)

The killing intent surged, and a beam flew from a shadow of the debris. Marida tried to evade right before that, but the machine was thoroughly damaged, and due to its unbalanced mass, could not move according to her will, causing the beam to scorch the “Kshatriya” armor as it was unable to dodge in time. The beams continued to pummel the machine, ostensibly making a mockery of it, causing the linear seat to teeter violently as if it was about to break apart. Cracks appeared on the all-view monitor panels, and as Marida gritted her teeth as she withheld her groans, she witnessed the sight of the “Sinanju” closing in on the undamaged panels.

There was no time to deploy the hidden arms inside the binders, and the beam Naginata swooped in on its leg. A jolt heavier than before shook the cockpit, causing her head to hit the console. The air cushions could not absorb the impact completely, and the helmet visor was shattered into pieces once it hit the edge of the console; at the same time, a bellow could be head from the flank, and a suffocating feeling, more profound than the pain, was pulverizing her. Viscous globs came out from her mouth, and the reddish-black fluids were dyed upon the cracked visor. While blood was leaking from the helmet, there were countless lights releasing afterimages amidst the starry space, fluttering away quickly from the left lower leg of the “Kshatriya”.

Her lung was probably punctured by a rib. From the moment she was created, she was trained to be familiar with diagnosing her body conditions; she moved her arm and leg, trying to control herself and stop spinning, but the machine was low on mobility once it lost a leg, and could not stop spinning, and she could not grasp the location of the “Sinanju”. *It’ll be over if I get hit again next time—how much longer can I fight?* The instant her fading consciousness had this fleeting thought, Zinnerman’s face appeared amidst the flowing stars for some reason, and she felt skeptical about her subconscious elation.

The eyes, filled with warmth deep within, drifted away from her spinning consciousness, and replacing it was the sound of Banagher's presence as he continued to fight. Mineva seemed to be yelling something as she tried to enter the battlefield, while her allies from the "Garencieres" and the familiar faces of those on the "Nahel Argama" were showing their existences to her, drifting in the stars. *What is this?* She wondered in her burning consciousness. *Is this the true 'light' that reflects my shape and appearance…and forms in others?*

Maybe it's just my imagination. Their existences however allow me to become human. Humans caused me to be dull, weak, affected by emotions, but I'm alive, Marida thought. *I'm not human, I'm alive.I found my own self through interacting with others, and the 'humans' I have taken for granted are calling for me.*

(It's over, Marida Cruz.)

Frontal's voice was ringing emptily in her ears. The price he paid for severing ties with everyone else and elevating himself was that he was not human, just an object with a pitiful vengeful spirit afflicted upon him. *It's not over yet. I'm different from you. I've people supporting me.* She gulped the oozing blood as she glared at the "Sinanju" through the use of the remaining monitor panels, pulling the ball grip with her all strength.

"It's not over yet—!"

The "Kshatriya" raised the beam saber in its left hand and sliced off its right shoulder. The frame supporting the binder was melted off, and the impact of the metal melting off reached her shoulder as two severed binders floated. She sliced off the left shoulder binders too, and with the machine now devoid of its wings, charged towards the "Sinanju", prompting her four binders along.

The psycoframe on the activation areas received the commands through the psycowaves, causing the binders to light its thrusters, becoming a form of funnel themselves. Two units with sub-arms intact in them fired beams at will, surrounding the "Sinanju" while the other two charged at the red machine in the form of large missiles.

(What…?)

Frontal sounded rattled as he exclaimed, slicing off one of them with a beam Naginata. The internal generator from the sliced binder let out a large ball of light, and the other binders attacked the "Sinanju" while it was wobbly. These binders, each of a similar mass to a mini mobile suit, crashed into the red machine, triggering several explosions.

Before it was engulfed by the many layers of fireballs, Marida let the "Kshatriya" escape from the scene.

The light overpowered and removed Frontal's presence, blowing away the surrounding debris. In the end, she witnessed the "Sinanju" shield and a damaged arm fluttering through with a mini nova-like shrinking in the backdrop, followed by countless icy debris remaining amidst the blueish-white gas. *Did I…succeed?* She watched the melted shield with the Neo Zeon insignia reflect the distant sunlight as it faded away, and stepped on the pedal to accelerate without looking back.

The rising G-force caused the blood floating in the cockpit to drift, and the monitor panels were rattling. The fractured rib had punctured her lungs, causing fresh blood to exude from her mouth; however, she gritted her teeth as she dragged the "Kshatriya" forward. The "Nahel Argama" was nearby, but she still could not return. *I have to prevent the 'light' supporting me from behind. I'm not alone, many 'lights' allow me to take shape. I have to protect the real 'light' forming within me.*

I can't die—no, I don't want to die yet. This thought appeared in her for the first time since her birth, and with this notion as motivation, the "Kshatriya", now human-like from the loss of its binders, raced through the vacuum. The conducting fluids were dripping like blood, igniting and causing small fireballs as the one-legged humanoid drew a trail of light like a shooting star.

Part 13[edit]

Multiple thoughts struck Alberto in the form of a gust, and the battlefield, now creating torrents all over the place, blew strong gusts. It was a savage yet familiar presence, the feeling of his scalp being tugged at, causing him to put a hand on his helmet.

"What? That's not Riddhe? Who's calling…!?"

He peered beyond the window of the control room and looked around. The only things he could see however was the thruster lights flashing about amidst the belt of light wavering about. The "Banshee" and "Unicorn Gundam" had gotten into the shadows, but one could say this was to be expected since there was a battle between them. The two machines continued to fly about at high speeds, and this base Jabber was simply a turtle compared to them. It was miraculous that he could quickly notice the two clashing mobile suits so soon after entering the battlefield.

Of course, there was a reason to this miracle. The containers on the platform contained a set of Unicorn-type spare psycoframe. It did not

escape its confines and out of the container, but the psycoframe inside would definitely be resonating, giving off light. The best proof of this theory was the psyco field floating outside the window, coupled with the “Banshee” and “Unicorn Gundam” that were fighting. The shockwaves from the clashes between these two machines merely extended towards the light approximately 20km in diameter, and did not escape the field. They surely would be able to escape considering their acceleration, but they did not. It felt as if the field was a link binding them together. The “Unicorn Gundam” seemed to be restrained by a binding feature of the psyco frame, and it was unable to escape no matter how it tried—this Base Jabber must have been the one binding them together.

The container was resonating with the “Banshee” psycoframe, forming a net that captured the “Unicorn Gundam”. Even without the psycommu function, Alberto was still able to tell where the “Unicorn Gundam” was, and had conveyed this information to Riddhe. One step more, and they would be able to corner Banagher, but there was another thought interfering, like a wet blanket interrupting —“Someone’s entering my mind…!” Alberto sounded annoyed as his hand remained on his throbbing temples, “Mr Alberto!” but another voice called out from reality, causing him to turn and glare.

“We’re at our limits. We have to leave.”

The pilot, ranked a Lieutenant, had been calling out for Alberto many times, looking at him palely through the helmet visor. Another thick beam of the beam Magnum rifle passed by, and a flash shone through the window, filling the control area. Did the “Banshee” fire it, or was it the “Unicorn Gundam”? No matter who it was however, Alberto knew that he would be blown away if they were to take a single graze. Intriguingly however, he did not feel fear; rather, he was more terrified of the notion of not doing anything and escaping from here. If Martha were to use the colony laser, there was no way he could save that woman. “No.” Alberto immediately denied the request and continued look at the two thruster flashes with his eyes.

“If we leave, the “Banshee” will be isolated. The “Unicorn” is worn out from the continual battles; we’re able to take it down if we keep this up. Hang on for just a little longer.”

We have to bury the “Unicorn Gundam” quickly and get the “Banshee” to look for her. “But…” the Lieutenant argued back, and Alberto clenched his fists as he hollered, “JUST DO IT!”

“If we’re successful, I’ll give you more money than whatever you can spend in your lifetime. Anyway—”

A gale blew by, passing through the ceiling, robbing him of the chance to continue on. A familiar thought entered him in the form of a gust, just as before. “What is this…?” Alberto endured the nauseous sensation as he groaned and looked at his feet. There were several thin lines of light on the floor covered by shadows, and after they flickered in his eyes, they raced towards the front of the Base Jabber, becoming a visible light in his sights.

Alberto was unable to catch sight of the fleeing light that escaped his eyes, so the replay visuals of the surveillance cameras were shown on the monitors. The rough CG-corrected image showed a stout machine. Its body was surrounded by the lights of the thrusters, but Alberto had quite an impression on it. It was deformed due to the damages, but it was—

“Is that…!?”

The pores on him opened, and his armpits were covered in sweat. It had lost the four binders, its biggest characteristics, but there was no doubt what it was. Alberto saw the “Kshatriya”, completely stripped to its bare bones, and instinctively reached his hand for the wireless communicator hidden in the helmet. “Riddhe, do you hear me?” he called out to the wireless communicator as he leaned forward, looking around.

“A Neo Zeon mobile suit is headed towards you. Don’t do anything to it! Th-the person inside is…!”

His mouth was frozen in fear, and he was gasping for breath as he could not say the name. Only noise could be heard from the communicator, as Riddhe did not give any reply. Alberto could not sense that his feelings were conveyed, and could only hammer the console hastily. *We’re able to agree on cornering the “Unicorn Gundam”, so why can’t I give such a simple instruction!!*

“Go after that machine! Capture that pilot alive!” Alberto yelled as he grabbed the Lieutenant, “You got to be kidding…!” only to be rebuffed; immediately afterwards, a flash from the beam Magnum passed by from above, and the Base Jabber shook greatly as it was affected by the shockwaves, the scattered particles raining on the machine itself.

“Marida!”

For the first time, Alberto called out her name amidst the turmoil. The “Kshatriya” light could no longer be seen as only the light of the battle far away continued to flicker in the field.

Part 14[edit]

The Beam Magnums were fired at each other, and as they clashed, the “Banshee” brought its left manipulator forward. The psycommu shock waves released by both sides allowed them to grasp each other’s location, and an invisible repulsion field occurred between the two immobile machines.

(This isn’t going to end…!)

Both sides had similar power outputs and calculation abilities. Even if they were to rob each other of the systems, it would be impossible to determine the winner. Riddhe pulled the “Banshee”, and the “Unicorn Gundam” did likewise, firing the Vulcan guns on its head as it let out a passing trail of fire. They both drew their beam sabers at the same time, and these two machines, practically peas in a pod, were slashing at each other.

“Right, my instincts matches yours. But—!”

The “Banshee” fired its beam Magnum from up close, and mounted the emptied rifle on the side of the left mount. It put its shield onto the back, and once it revealed the beam tonfas on its arms, it charged at the “Unicorn Gundam” right after it had dodged a beam.

“My will to kill is different from yours!!!”

The “Banshee” lit its thrusters and swung its beam tonfas sideways. One beam saber alone was unable to block the attack, and the beam blade of the tonfa grazed by the side of the suppressed “Unicorn Gundam” head. The gaseous plasma floated out from the melted armor, and the “Unicorn Gundam” immediately turned around and left the “Banshee”. (Mr Riddhe. You’re being consumed by the machine!) Banagher’s voice rang.

(The “Banshee” NT-D is out of control. You’ll be destroyed at this rate!)

“That’s fine. The NT-D’s a destroyer system of Newtypes anyway! It’s a system that purges the ailments that threatens humanity!”

The “Banshee” left the space, turned around, and opened its arms wide, taking the form of a windmill as it slashed the “Unicorn Gundam”. The white machine barely retreated at the last moment, and activated the two beam tonfas.

“Because of a stupid fantasy of humanity continuing to evolve, a curse from 100 years ago is now reality! Someone has to be sacrificed to maintain the status quo!”

Both sides continued to spin, and the beams continued to clash two, three times as they fought through infighting methods. Riddhe

pretended to attack for a 4th time, but kept his tonfas back, and charged right at the “Unicorn Gundam”. The tonfa swung at the face was parried aside, and the other beam blade aimed at the flank was blocked by a beam saber. 4 beam sabers were warding off each other, (Mr Riddhe…!) Banagher’s groan rang through the communicator.

“You’re just like me; we’re suitable sacrifices for this. The Marcenas left this curse behind, and the Vist family hid this curse. We inherit their bloods; once we vanish, this 100 year grudge will disappear.”

(Are you serious…!?)

“That shouldn’t have happened. It was supposed to be a prayer, not a curse. If not for the existence called Newtypes being created…!”

As his heating consciousness yelled out, the “Unicorn Gundam” moved its arms, and the “Banshee” had its tonfas parried backwards as it staggered. Riddhe managed to steady himself immediately, but the “Unicorn Gundam” got behind him, at a speed such that it was immediately to see it whilst time were multiplied by 10.

The machine, moving at near-teleportation speed, swung its tonfa at the back of the “Banshee”. The latter dodged the attack aimed for the shoulder joint, and turned around to face the continuous attacks, dodging the beam blades that were coming at the shoulder joints at terrifying precision as he twitched his body left and right. “That strength of yours is the greatest proof!” Riddhe yelled, and the “Banshee” reacted faster than his controls as it swung the tonfa at the beam particles closing in on him.

“You’re no longer an ordinary human, you’re a human adapted to space, a subspecies of humanity called Newtypes, the type of people who turned the curse of “Laplace Box” into reality…!”

Riddhe capitalized on the forward momentum as he stepped forward, and it was time for him to attack. The beam blades continued to flicker, letting out sparks like a machine gun, causing the phosphorous light released from the machines to be dulled.

“That’s why I’ll beat you with my hands as a normal human, even if my soul’s devoured by this machine!”

To maintain the current world, the society where billions of ordinary people lived—Riddhe continued to swing the beam tonfas as he harbored the words that were exploding within his heart. (No, that’s not it, Mr Riddhe!) Banagher’s voice echoed, and the eyes of the “Unicorn Gundam” were suddenly filled with a light, resembling that of a human’s.

(You're a Newtype too. The light from this psycoframe is coming from you.)

"What…!?"

(You should be able to hear this. Everyone's worried about you. Audrey, and the guys on the "Nahel Argama".)

The light from the two eyes passed through his scorching heart and mind, causing his hand on the controls to grip. The 'voice' he had excluded from his consciousness before came in, entering his frozen body. *What, why, sto-stop it!!* Whilst he was unable to distinguish between the many voices, Alberto's voice was mixed in amongst them, simply calling out for something, and a pressure was ostensibly choking him. *What's this? I can see the thoughts of others. I can sense the existences of those related to me.* (Alberto…my brother's calling out too.) In the midst of this vortex of confusion and fear, Riddhe quietly listened in on Banagher.

(It's not about our births, but how we're living on. Anyone can become Newtypes, as long as we don't lose the heart to feel.)

"…It's just noise coming from the Psycommu. It's just the psycowaves the "Banshee" is picking up!"

This has to be the case. If that's not it, what exactly am I doing? Riddhe continued to yell as he rejected the "Unicorn Gundam", but the voices continued to ring, causing him to cuddle his head. (The machine's just an amplifier! Why don't you understand…!) Banagher's growl broke through his skullcap, causing much more pressure on his throbbing mind.

(That "Banshee" is also a beast of possibilities. It has a system that reacts to the hearts of humans.)

"Shut up. Don't say anything…!"

(If the "Box" really brings disaster, just destroy it. Let us go together, Mr Riddhe. Audrey hopes for it too.)

His temples were throbbing, and his head was about to be splinted. He could feel the strength seeping from within and the force flowing in from outside, clashing with each other as they burdened his mind. *That's enough. Stop it! Don't just talk in my mind!* "SHUT UP!" He yelled with all his might, and stepped on the pedal until the end. The "Banshee" escaped from the "Unicorn Gundam", hid the lights of the beam tonfas, took his beam rifle again, and looked around tentatively.

“Where’re you, Alberto!? The noise’s too strong! I can’t hear you!”

The psyco field flickered along with the light, and the Base Jabber flying about unsteadily appeared in the "Banshee" sighs. "Is that is…!?" Riddhe muttered as a severe migraine struck him, causing him to cover his helmet with both hands. *Stop it, stop it! Don't do it!* Multiple thoughts pierced through his mind, and the silhouette of the Base Jabber was shrouded with denial. He suppressed the trembling going from his skull to his helmet, and glared at the Base Jabber with hostility.

"No, that's the guy that was being noisy just now…!"

That's not Alberto's machine. Having recognized this, the "Banshee" drew its beam saber and charged towards the Base Jabber. (Don't don't it, Riddhe!) with Banagher's plea behind him, he caught sight of the bed-shaped Type-94 Base Jabber, and saw 2 mobile armors fastened upon it. He recognized that it was the Manhunters' tanks, and memories of what seemed a month ago appeared in his mind. The smell of the "Nahel Argama" mobile suit deck entered his nostrils, the model of the biplane that was still left in his room, the call Squad Leader Norm made before he died, *"I haven't forgotten about the promise to watch a movie!" Ensign Mihiro's murmurs--*

"Stop trying to confuse me…!"

He shook aside the memories that were stopping him, and drew the beam saber. The Type-94 Base Jabber, without any decent weapon, could only avoid the attack slowly, and when the particles were about to hit the cockpit at the front, another 'voice' from afar passed through his voice in the form of a 'voice'.

--Stop it, there's someone important to you on board.

A woman's 'voice' clearly rang in his mind, and he instinctively drew back his beam saber. The Base Jabber just happened to pass by the "Bansee" within 0.1 seconds right , and the face staring at him through the canopy filter entered his sights.

"Mineva…!?"

Despite her being dressed in the normal suit, he could clearly determine that she was shouting something. *Why?* The moment he pondered this, the Base Jabber passed by his feet, and the departing trail of thruster light increased its distance from the "Banshee". Riddhe let his machine float about, and then, he spotted a machine, ostensibly the owner of the 'voice', pass by his sights.

It was a monoeye mobile suit with a massive frame, releasing a presence different from killing intent at the "Banshee". It was a different profile, but it seemed similar to that 4-winged mobile suit. *Mineva called it the "Kshatriya"; is that one of the Neo Zeon units that allied with the "Nahel Argama"?* Riddhe thought of this within an instant as he looked back at the monoeye that was clearly staring at him. However, he looked away from that one-legged mobile suit before he could be caught in confusion. There's someone important to you on board--*how do you know that?* ***You're just a man-made puppet****. How do you know about Mineva and I...*

(Miss Marida!) The "Unicorn Gundam" called out as it approached the lone-legged mobile suit. The psycoframe was giving of a glow that was either yellow or green, the rainbow light pressing upon the "Banshee". *You see, we can resonate like this. Banagher's consciousness drifted to him in the form of the light, causing blood to gush up Riddhe's dizzy consciousness. He raised the beam rifle, loaded the spare magazine, and aimed the gun at the source of the light. At that moment, a thick beam was fired from the back, and the "Banshee" stumbled due to the impact.*

"A ship cannon…!?"

The main cannon-class mega particles continued to fire, the beams robbing the "Banshee" of its footing as they ripped through the vacuum. Riddhe escaped from the torrent, and glared at the source of the shots through the filter of the psyco fields. The white ship frame of the "Nahel Argama" was gradually approaching as it blew apart the debris in its way. *Stop, stop it. You mustn't!* Countless voices pressurized him along with the voices, and the lights and voices nearly seared his senses away as they rained upon the "Banshee". *That's the ship I was on firing at me now.* Thoughts of denial was chiding his mind--

"IS EVERYONE GOING TO DENY ME NOW…!?"

He yelled, and aimed the beam rifle at the "Nahel Argama". *That bag's full of denial thoughts Got to make that bridge disappear.* Riddhe's finger squeezed the trigger without thinking about anything else. His sights, synchronized with the "Banshee", was dyed right, and he clearly spotted the wooden horse-like bridge.

(STOP IT--!)

Banagher screamed, but Riddhe had already squeezed the trigger. The mega particles encapsulated in cylinders within the E-Pack were completely released, and the Beam Magnum let out a beam, firing right

at the "Nahel Argama"--however, the one-legged mobile suit suddenly stopped in front of this beam.

The "Kshatriya" arms and body were spread wide, looking at if it was protecting the "Nahel Argama", its massive body taking a direct hit from the Beam Magnum. Its upper body was instantly vaporized, and the lower body drifted in space temporarily before an explosion expanded, causing the "Kshatriya" to disappear without a trace.

(Woah--!)

A voiceless light spread about, resonating with the roar of a beast'. It was the voice of the "Unicorn Gundam"--Banagher's voice. This voice seemed to have caused him to lose all sanity, a beast-like voice spreading through spread, to a point where the term anguish was insufficient in describing it, and Riddhe sensed that his fingers on the trigger was starting to tremble. The light from the explosion started to expand, engulfing the white machine that was wailing to high above. In the midst of this light that covered his sights, something else gave off a sharp light different from the explosion, and a rain of light scattered everywhere like numerous eedles.

"Wha...what is this light…?"

The rain of light passed through the armor and entered the cockpit, permeating through Riddhe's body, causing his body on the linear seat to quiver. It could not be called an explosion light, as this light expanded, erasing his sights and thoughts, engulfing the "Banshee" that stood there blankly. The light spread throughout the entire space, shining brighter than all the stars between the Moon and the Earth.

Part 15[edit]

The lights left in vacuum continued to spread, the "Kshatriya" vanished just like that, like the dozens of mobile suits that were shot down in this battlefield, on this day. One had to think of what those pilots were thinking, and whether any of them had similar lives.

He seemed to be screaming; this fuzzy impression was the only memory left within his mind. There was no voice, no thought as Banagher watched the light engulf Marida. *She's dead--impossible. There's no reason for her to be dead. I still haven't brought her to the ice cream shop. She still hasn't treated her thoroughly battered body. She never had time to talk with Zinnerman.*

Everything was just about to begin. She had undone the curse bound to her, and she was about to live on; how could someone die without having lived a life? Why did she disappear without leaving even a bone

behind? She's not died. Miss Marida, impossible…

Banagher was crying; his body had accepted reality faster than his soul, shedding tears unconditionally. The light of the psycoframe changed amidst his hazy vision, and the cockpit showed a red attack color. Banagher narrowed his soaked eyes, and whilst driven by the light reflecting his heart, he aimed the beam rifle at the shining, still "Banshee".

He gritted his teeth, and held the trigger with the finger of the manipulator. He would not be able to breathe if he did not do so, and the heat in his heart was filling his body, about to break through it. *I won't forgive you. Disappear.* He muttered in his heart, now a core reactor, and just when his finger was about to exert strength, he saw a light descend gently, taking the form of a hand, grabbing the muzzle of the rifle.

--That's not it, Banagher.

The hand of light gently lowered the beam rifle, and permeated into the cockpit through the armor. Bangher could ostensibly smell the sweet fragrance Marida had as he hurriedly reached his hand for the light.

--He's in pain too. You should understand.

His fingertips tried to grab onto it, only to miss and hit the display board, letting out a blunt sound. He could not touch it; it was so warm, yet he could not grab it. He looked up at the translucent light that floated there, looking down upon him, "Bu-But…!" Banagher yelled,

"But that's too much! Nothing good ever happened to you! Just war, injuries, chaos…! Maybe...you could have lived your own life in the future…!"

The voice he eked out was drowned by his sobbing, and he, unable to vent his emotions completely, let out tears from his eyes. Marida touched his trembling shoulders, bent down, and gently embraced Banagher. The light embracing the latter was filled with her weight and warmth, dripping into his heart little by little.

--That's not it. You're crying for me, and I know many are mourning over my demise. That's good enough for me.

"What about the Captain? If you're not around too, what's going to happen to him? You're his 'light'…"

He pulled in the light he could not embrace, his hands pressing onto his chest, unable to touch anything physical. *You're in my heart*

because you shone the 'light' in me. She showed a slightly troubled smile as she wiped his tears with her glowing finger, and left the cockpit just as she had entered.

--Banagher, right now, I can see things you all can't.

Marida said as she stood in vacuum through the all-view monitor. On the other side was a sea of psyco field, with rainbow light floating in it. It was a field of light formed by human hearts…

--Every person is standing in front of that door. Maybe one day, the time will come when they step through it physically. I can even see time, filled with light here.

"Time...you can see...time…?"

--There's a path reaching out beyond this rainbow.

Marida muttered as she swayed her long hair and blended with the light. Banagher tried to chase after her subconsciously, and once he realized that he had left his physical body because of this, he felt as if he was floating amidst this psyco field.

An illusion? Perhaps. Even if he was a Newtype, he never thought that the human consciousness and body could be so free. He however was certainly thrown into space, drifting in the sea of the psyco field, resonating with the light Marida gave. At the same time, a clear thought drew a line through space, and in this region not hindered by time and space, their consciousness resonated like they were playing about, touching every single heart in this space.

The "Banshee" looked lost while its horns gave off a golden light, drifting in space. The black pilot suit inside the machine was trembling in the midst of his filled body and mind, probably still unable to understand what he just saw. Riddhe did not know how to haggle, would only face things head on, and did not know how to change. There was no time to re-button as his lonely soul continued to seal himself amidst the light.

--That soul doesn't know how to change, and is destroying others as well as himself.

Marida said to him. "Hii…!" he let out a shriek upon touching the thought, in the form of a light, his body writhing, his eyes widening in fear. Such a reaction was certainly due to him being unable to adapt.

--This world will not be formed if it had not been done. However, if you continues to insist on this, it will keep suffocating you. I hope you will continue to stay by Banagher. The Lion and the Unicorn has to be

balanced as equals. If there is only one, he might destroy the world.

"What, is this voice...am-am I crazy…?"

Riddhe's eyes were rolling about, his hands pressing on his helmet, his teeth clattering, unable to grit. However, his eyes did not lose sanity however, for his inner consciousness understood that this was a necessary 'voice'. His outer consciousness too was starting to realize this.

--You can calm down and look at your surroundings. The world is so wide; so many people are resounding with each other.

His trembling eyes blinked several times as he looked around the space around him. The psyco frame reflecting his soul became much gentler, and the lion "Gundam" gradually calmed down. Once she patted the machine that was her alter ego, Marida left the "Banshee". "Wait…!" With Riddhe lifting his head behind her, her consciousness, drifting in space, went for another source of light.

Alberto was surrounded by the luminous light leaking out from the psyco frames in the containers, his Base Jabber drifting silently in space. Basked in the midst of the light from the "Kshatriya" explosion, he realized that his hopes were dashed, but his feeble soul was unable to accept reality. His empty voice continued to seek the hope that no longer existed, seeping from the cramped control room, yet unable to reach anyone.

"That light...what did you do, Riddhe? Tell me the situation. Your voice...I can't hear anything…"

--The person who tried to love me.

The light shining upon him conveyed Marida's consciousness, and his massive body, squashed into the co-pilot suit, was shuddering, "Marida…" he murmured, and at that instant, he showed a heinous look His anguish was turned into hatred, for while attacking others, he ended up hurting himself in this twisted yet tragic role. Like usual, he tried to convert the grief he could not handle into hatred for others, and dyed his body, already used to despair, into black.

"Who shot you down? Riddhe!? Riddhe!? Did you do it!? Damn it, Riddhe!? Why did you let Marida appear on the battlefield! You're always trampling those important to--"

--Nobody is at fault here. What happened to that person can only happen to him. What happened to yourself is the same.

He was betrayed by his father, and was egged by his aunt into taking him down. To make up for the darkness that was born, he hated his half-brother, gave Riddhe the "Banshee", and then--this hatred vanished from Alberto's eyes once he understood everything, and he let out tears of remorse. "Bu-but…!" he let out a toddler's whimper, and wanted to embrace the light. His body however fell onto the console, and this anguish he felt head on for the first time caused his profile to shudder.

"It's alright if you don't love me. I just want you to be with me. I feel that I can definitely start anew if I'm with you...I can't do it alone. There's no way I can do it alone…!"

--Don't be afraid. You've already started anew. I hope you can tell everyone what you wanted to tell me.

"No! Are you dead!? Are you going to leave me alone just like mom!? I don't want to hear what someone says before dying and leaving me alone!"

--Alberto...you'll die as well if this keeps up. Think of how to live along with everyone. You know you can't do it alone.

"Wait! Don't get, Marida! My…!"

Marida grasped that outstretched hand, and after conveying the final bit of warmth, her light faded. Alberto embraced that gradually fading warmth as he bent down, trying his best to keep it. He was curled in a ball, sobbing away; however, that was not a vengeful call nobody could hear, but a cry from his heart, one that could touch the souls of others…

"Is the "Nahel Argama" alright? Did something become a shield!"

(It's not the "Gundam", but the light's too strong. I can't tell. What is that light down there…?)

The pilot in the "Loto" answered Conroy's bellow with a stunned tone. Mineva however had already understood what had happened. In the control room of this Type-94 Base Jabber, she alone bore the gravity of something lost as she silently watched the light shining in from outside the room. The poignant, towering light of consciousness was filled with warmth and gentleness within.

--I'm sorry, Princess. This is the end for Marida Cruz.

Thus, she was not surprised in the least to hear this 'voice', this thought passing through her body. Mineva lowered her emerald eyes,

"Seriously, you…" she eked out a trembling voice, her tears flowing till her long eyelashes as she basked in the light filled with Marida's consciousness, it flickering like morning dew.

"i...I don't know how to apologize to you for all these. Zeon only caused you all this pain...never giving you any reward…"

--If your heart is always that tightened, it will snap. Please open up your heart, Princess. You still have something else to do.

Mineva's shoulders quivered slightly as she lifted her moist face. Her eyes, reflecting the flickering of the light, started to focus, as if Marida was really there.

--I'll leave Banagher to you. He still has yet to control his power completely. He needs your help, Princess.

"Bu-but, Marida...you may be what the Unicorn needs…"

The thing that continues to exist in the silver mirror, and the beast of possibilities in her heart. Mineva reflected upon how she was unable to do anything, and was the cause of Riddhe's rampage, and clenched her fists. Marida left behind a lonely smile as her transparent body departed from Mineva.

--Bodies with blood flowing through them need human bodies that can also bring warmth. Please go on, Banagher is still calling for you.

"Banagher…?"

Marida nodded at Mineva as the latter murmured, and she again dissolved into the light. She continued to race through this time and space that had yet to cease, but was not flowing smoothly, her consciousness arriving at the last place she had to visit.

The damaged ship was basked in the light, and to the "Nahel Argama" that was sailing through the debris, this strange light was simply one of the continuous phenomena. Having become a shield for this ship, the light spread about, and everyone in the bridge was stunned, but they did not lose their sanities of having to deal with reality.

"It's the "Kshatriya! Lieutenant Marida sacrificed herself as a shield…!"

"Was she shot down!?"

"Hurry up and check on it!! This is different from an explosion!!"

Mihiro's shriek, Liam's shout and Otto's holler could be heard in order, yet Zinnerman was the only one not to be stunned as he looked at the

light with a face exceptionally calm to a bystander. It was not because he was unsure of the situation, but that one could even say he knew before anyone else, and had accepted it. The consciousness that was mixed amidst the light reached the bridge before the observation report came in, standing in front of him.

--Captain, the Federation and the Vist Foundation have locked down this space region. They won't attack immediately, but please be careful. I sense a powerful energy swirling.

"Marida...y-you idiot. You came here right at the end to say such a thing…"

Zinnerman understood very well that he was the one she trusted most, and that was why she conveyed such an important information. Even so, he was unable to contain the unspeakable anguish and fury that was seeping out of his entire body, and he stared at the light of consciousness gathered above the console. Marida watched the tears rain from his eyes, her consciousness seemingly looking down as the light flickered.

"Don't worry about us. Talk about yourself. You're going now, right? Are you going to where Fee and Marie are now? Complain about something! Don't give that acceptance look! Scold me…! I...I never did anything for you…"

--I just wanted to see you again. I'm worried...if it had hit me, would it be enough to negate the power of the beam. It's great that you're alright, Captain.

"Marida…!"

--I finally can't say it fully. What you did for me, you saved me...you're my 'light', the 'light' of this human called Marida Cruz.

The light flashing outside the window gradually faded away, and Marida's consciousness started to dim. Zinnerman suddenly got up from his seat, wanting to grab the disappearing consciousness, only to miss and fall upon the console.

"Don't joke with me now! Come back! Revive from the dead and return to me! If you can't do that, I'll go over! Don't go anywhere now, Marida! I take back that order just now! Stay by me! Don't leave me alone…!"

--Papa, don't put me on the spot.

Marida's consciousness swayed as it covered the hands grabbing onto the console, her last remaining weight and warmth synchronizing with ZInnerman's.

Zinnerman wanted to embrace her tightly, but was unable to do so as he hugged his own shoulder. His shoulders were writhing like a paralytic, and his sobbing echoed through the bridge, not caring about his own image at all.

--There are also many other 'lights' gathered here. Many 'lights' have yet to notice each other's 'light', waiting silently in the darkness...please look for them, like the time when I was reborn.

The light vanished, and Marida's consciousness lost tangibility as it melted away from Zinnerman's body. He continued to embrace his writhing body as he pressed his helmet on the console, not moving afterwards. As Otto and the rest watched on wordlessly, the suppressed sobbing could be heard from the back of the normal suit as it continued to tremble silently, blending into the body of 'light' that would never disappear.

The light finally vanished without a trace, and the vacuum was reverted back to its original darkness. Having forgotten about his physical body, Banagher left Marida's consciousness as the latter gradually lost her form as a human, and he returned to his physical body that was left inside the "Unicorn Gundam".

Marida's consciousness disappeared into the horizon along with the light from the psyco field, to a place the human consciousness could not reach. Out of the Solar System, on the other end of the Milky Way, to another universe...linking to the other end of the rainbow, the horizon called possibilities. Either way, the place there would be filled with light, even the concept of time itself. There would definitely be no wars, an infinite horizon--the residence of the God called possibilities certainly existed on the other end of this rainbow.

But to the bodies of flesh, that place was too far away. They had to fight all irrationality, understand each other using the power they had, and pass on the warmth of this body. Banagher lifted his head, his dried teary stared at the space shown in the actual footage.

He could no longer hear Marida's voice. What surrounded him was only the world he could sense, and the billions of stars surrounding the "Unicorn Gundam" seemed to be telling him that this was enough; they shone hard lights upon him, lighting the space that was not fully utilized.

Part 16[edit]

Once the light had fully dissipated, a blueish-white gas was left behind,

showing an icy color. None of the machine's debris could be seen, for it was practically vaporized, and only the space debris, floating around for countless years, was slowly drifting away, slowly twirling the thinning gaseous clouds.

It was a typical scene of a downed site...but there was something different. Riddhe had a feeling of the world changed once the explosion occurred, that something was reversed. The beams had ceased, and after he looked around as the silent shoal space region, he opened the visor to wipe the sweat off his face.

The trembling of his hand could not stop. He felt the agony in his heart become a lead block, his gut weighed down. The thoughts released by another person in that instant formed a weight deep within his heart. His maddening senses filled his body, yet the owner of that vanished 'voice' lingered somewhere deep within his heart.

"Is this, a Newtype's senses...?"

He originally intended to cry out and deny the voice, but another wave of trembling reached his fingertips. It was not the noise from the psycoframe, so who is it? The "Banshee" lost the glow of its psycoframe, and as Riddhe let it face the gas silently, (That's not it) he heard a strong voice, was taken aback by it, and turned to look behind.

(Miss Marida, she has always been doing her best...she has always tried her best to live on, that's why she's able to pass on her voice.)

The hushed voice was trembling, and the “Unicorn Gundam”, standing less than a kilometer away, was giving off a gentle light. They had been fighting each other just an instant ago, but he could not sense any hostility or fear. Their attempts to kill each other just before this was simply a surreal, distant memory. Riddhe did not feel mystified by it as he simply stared at the machine that had lost its luster, “Banagher...” he called out skeptically, but the “Unicorn Gundam” never responded as it lit its vernier thrusters, turned away, and went off, exposing its undefended back.

The “Nahel Argama” was not there. He knew that Banagher was headed to “Industrial 7”, but he could not understand where he was supposed to go. *she has always tried her best to live on, that's why she's able to pass on her voice.*. Riddhe repeated these words in his heart, and turned his sights to the black gloved hand.

It doesn't matter if I'm a Newtype or not. What matters is whether my heart can reach out to others, and whether I can accept others. It's useless segregating them right from the beginning; nobody's voice

would reach me. I mixed up my family issues with my personal grudges, and I killed someone through my lapse of judgment and hatred, and I have nobody to convey my thoughts to. That 'voice' told me there's someone important on board, that woman Alberto likes, she told me this world's too big, that there's no need to despair, that I should find someone who can relieve this hatred from me, and yet, with these hands of mine, I--

He could not locate the Type-94 Base Jabber within the sensors, he could not hear Alberto's voice, and the “Nahel Argama” remained silent, not letting out a single voice. *I'm alone.* He truly felt this, the lead of anguish melting in his heart, gushing out from his eyes in the form of tears. *Nobody's willing to talk to me. I let down Mineva, Banagher, Alberto, father, everyone. I really want to start again, turn back time, meet with everyone again. I won't take the wrong path this time. I won't be alone again, and I'll live on to be the me everyone knows of, the one that will live with everyone,*

“But, none of this...can be taken back...again...”

The endless stream of tears floated the moment they flowed out, drifting in front of his eyes in the form of round goblets. Riddhe was surrounded by the water droplets that washed his ignorance away, whimpering in the cockpit of the “Banshee”.

Part 17[edit]

Having felt a sudden headache, Ronan reached his hand for his head.

He felt an inexplicable sense of pressure, and what swarmed after that was a tremendous sharp migraine that reached his chest. He felt as if the little Riddhe back then was crying, *is it just my imagination?* He recalled the pressure that brought about gloom in his chest, and rubbed his eyes, took a deep breath, and stared at the 6 large panel monitors. Martha, standing beside him, glanced over, “It's been tough on you.” and muttered,

“Do you need a smoke in the restroom, or at least a seat?”

“No need for that. If the colony laser's fired without me witnessing it, I won't be able to bear it.”

Martha merely laughed it off, and never talked about it again. Ronan noticed sweat falling from her forehead, and was sure that the woman had sensed it. He again stared at the telescopic footage captured from the moon.

The situation in the 'Caucacus Forest'--the control room for the colony

laser 'Gryphios 2' had yet to change. The incoming reports were all militaristic, and the battlefield shown on the telescopic visual merely showed light spots that could not be identified. However, something heavy did blow through this control room. It seemed to be an outcry, or a gust, quaking the minds of everyone present in the room. Ronan even had a vision of something occurring on the other side of the screen.

His temples pulsating along with the migraine, he saw a vision of an explosion expanding, giving off a rain of light. Of course, that was not reality; even if he wanted to joke, he would not say that he managed to hear a cry from a battlefield more than 300,000km away, and he did not feel that he could sense that. That was simply a collective hypnosis from the flickering light far away..Ronan barely managed to conclude this as he stared at the flashing beacon that was still wavering. “It has been 3 minutes since we observed the last light from the battle.” Commander Ables approached to Ronan's side and spoke stiffly,

“It seems the battle has ended, and the “Nahel Argama” is still around. Looking at the current speed, it will take them another 30 minutes to reach “Industrial 7”.”

His face was slightly paled, for the entire Neo Zeon fleet that had gathered was shot down by a mere ship, and this rebel ship was approaching its objective, clearly a show of the threat level they presented. Ronan calmly accepted the developments that had occurred, but was skeptical as to how he had predicted the battle would end. He did not look at anyone as his stare returned to the monitors. Ables then turned his sights to Martha,

“The remaining Neo Zeon fleet, with the “Rewloola” as the center, will reach the target an hour and a half later than the “Nahel Argama”. The firing safety has been confirmed. You may give your instructions.”

“It means the time has arrived.”

Martha folded her arms on her chest, her eyes holding a sharp glint. “Not yet.” Ronan felt himself taking a step closer to the cliff as he denied her.

“It might not be too late even if they do make contact with the “Box”.”

“How relaxed you are...it will be too late once they open the “Box”!”

“The opening of the “Box” refers to the revelations of the secrets inside. There is a need to recognize what they will really do.”

Mineva Zabi is a wise girl, and if she knows of the truth, there is a

possibility that she will keep the secret of the "Box". Ronan felt that if it was her, he would be able to carry out political talks with her, but at the same time, he recalled the unfettered emerald eyes, and could only stare at the footage of "Industrial 7" with a heavy heart. "Only those who know what's inside the "Box" can make such a decision." Martha narrowed her eyes at him,

"At this juncture, you can at least tell me what the "Laplace Box" contained, what that thing that was supposed to be destroyed with the Prime Minister's residence contained."

The expected question came at him, and he sighed slightly. To Martha, this was simply the perfect opportunity. No matter what kind of outcome was to happen, the Federation and the Vist Foundation's coexistence would head for a new phase. He felt it was meaningless to remain silent, and just when he was about to face a somewhat nervous looking Martha, "Commander Ables!" the metal doors behind opened, and a bellow echoed through the control room.

"There is an emergency. Please allow me to ent--"

A man pushed aside the guard at the door and stormed in, his face frozen once he spotted Ronan. Ronan and Martha too gasped, "Senator Ronan...Lady Martha..." Bright Noa muttered as he stared at their faces. "Captain Bright, I don't suppose I gave you the permit to enter." Ables glared as he took a step forward; Ronan however already knew from their meeting at his own residence that he was not a man who particularly paid heed to rank or authority. As he had expected, Bright ignored Ables and looked around; once he spotted the anomaly 'Gryphios 2', he glared at Ronan and the rest with some stunned furty.

"What are you doing here!?"

The sharp roar caused all the personnel at their terminals to turn back. Ables seemed to be overwhelmed by his authority as he gasped, his face flushed, but Ronan glanced at Ables, raised a hand to stop him, and turned back at Bright. At the same time, he glanced at Martha's lowered look, *seriously* the latter seemingly saying this. He then gave an expression to Ables, indicating for the guards at the door to back off. "It's none of your business" The commander showed anger due to his lost pride, but Bright did not mind as he looked back at Ronan.

Where did he get this information from--it was useless to think about it. Bright was the one who planned for the "Nahel Argama" to meet with Mineva's group and head for the "Box", and Ronan, not anyone else, was the one who implicated Bright in this. Even if he was to be redeployed, with his connections and foresight, it was not a strange

thing to be found. Ronan did not feel too skeptical about it, just amazed that all the actors had arrived, and turned to look at the screen again. He caught sight of the telescopic visual showing the colony laser, “Industrial 7”, the shoal space battlefield, and other places. “We don't have an option.” he looked around at what may be a depiction of a conspiracy, and muttered.

“They're the ones making the decisions. Everything will soon end.”

He lowered his chin, and spotted anxiety on the sidelong face of Bright as the latter looked up at the screen. The light beacon of the “Nahel Argama” moved slowly, closing in on “Industrial 7”.

Part 18[edit]

She passed through the cabin at the back, through the air lock, and arrived at the platform of the Type-94 base Jabber exposed to vacuum. A tank-mode “Loto” was moving around on this space large enough for a mobile suit to lie on, a rectangular space large enough for a bed to be filled. Mineva grabbed onto a safety hook at the side of the airlock, tightened it, stepped off the platform and flew to the “Loto”. Her

vision, unhindered by anything, showed the silent shoal space region, and she could see numerous space debris floating around at relative velocity.

The newly formed debris were on the same path as the Base Jabber, surrounding it. They were shone upon by the moon that seemed large enough to be embraced, flickering time from time to time like a group of fireflies dancing in vacuum. The debris field was moving faster than the Base Jabber, slowly floating beside Mineva. Countless fragments of light flickered and frolicked, lighting the path to Industrial 7.

Marida's fragments. Mineva was affected by these words that suddenly appeared in her heart, and she bit her lips. She took a deep sigh, and turned her body to the back of the machine. The thruster flare could be seen flickering far away, and the white humanoid machine appearing in the darkness was gradually approaching. Soon after, she could identify it as the “Unicorn”, its thruster flares slowing down, positioning itself above the Base Jabber.

The lone horned giant had removed itself from its destroy mode as it slowly descended. The pure white armor showed the numerous wounds and burns that stained it, and Mineva was left speechless at the unexpected damage incurred. Its cockpit suddenly opened, and a hole appeared at the abdomen as the machine looked down at Mineva. *Banagher's calling for you*--she did not reflect too much upon the 'voice' she just heard as she stepped off the “Loto” and leapt up, reaching the opened quadrilateral cockpit before the “Unicorn” manipulator could grab the platform guide and attain relative speed with the Base Jabber.

The inside of the cockpit was exceptionally dark, probably because the all-view monitor was showing the footage of space. Mineva's upper body entered the darkness that was no different from the outside, and stared at the white pilot suit appearing in the darkness. “Banagher...” she inadvertently called out, and the helmet tilted slightly, seemingly realizing the voice as his eyes blinked, (Audrey...why're you here?) his lethargic stare could be seen through the visor, and he looked ready to let go in front of her eyes, not having realized that the cockpit hatch was opened. Mineva instantly embraced Banagher.

She held his helmet with both hands, and their bodies were clinging to each other on the linear seat. Banagher's mental state was different from hers, trying his best to suppress his emotions--and if this kept up, he would have been destroyed. As she embraced his cold body, wanting to at least pass on some warmth to him, “Audrey...?” there seemed to be direct communication between them, for their helmets

were connected. Banagher sounded skeptical at this sudden action, but his arms too were embracing her, not letting go. The familiar hands were were holding onto her, seemingly latching onto the body that was about to fall off, giving her some warmth through the normal suit.

“...Miss Marida, she said everything to me.”

After some time, Banagher murmured. Mineva backed away a little and peered at the face hidden beneath the visor.

“She told me not to be angry, to forgive Ensign Riddhe. I did it...”

His eyes showed trails of tears, the trembling in his body having reached Mineva. The latter embraced his helmet, sticking onto his body as she ostensibly absorbed that trembling. “You managed to do it.” She eked out a sobbing voice.

“It's amazing, Banagher. Marida's definitely proud of you...”

“Of course. She requested this of me for the first time...bu-but...”

The arms stretching from the waist to the back exerted strength, and the sobbing breath quivered the helmet. Mineva too closed her crying eyes.

“Can you let me remain like this...?”

His voice was cracking, seemingly having found a way to vent his frustrations, and Mineva, as a response, embraced him with enough strength not to lose to him. The trembling got strong, and the sobbing caused the shoulders to vacillate. Banagher let out a cry as he entrusted his body to Mineva, who was embracing him tightly.

He had a childish lack of restraint, crying wholeheartedly even after venting all his emotions. his undulated quivering shook the floating tears. Mineva looked back, and at the cockpit hatch in front of her, she could see a trail of stars in the galaxy. As the galaxy laid in the background, there was an object, the size of a thumb, floating there; it was where everything began, where she met and entered the life of this person trembling in her arms. “Industrial 7” was floating along with the colony builder “Magallanica”, drifting in the shoal space region.

Marida had showed them the horizon where the god of possibilities lived was so distant, but no matter what sort of truth awaited them, they could only move forward. As they entrusted their movements to the Base Jabber, Mineva stared at the “Industrial 7” that got bigger. The space had lost all hostility, still remaining dark as ever, yet Marida's fragments surrounded them, continuing shining a dim light.

Part 19[edit]

The small thruster lights passed through the other end of the countless debris. The Base Jabber made contact with the “Unicorn”, and that light was veiled amidst the sea of space debris in their eyes, vanishing from their binoculars sights.

Nigel sighed as he removed the binoculars strapped upon his helmet. The “Jesta” surveillance cameras had better analytical abilities than the binoculars on the normal suit, but the condition was that the machine had to be in working condition. He closed the access hatch at his feet, and started checking on his unit's condition from the torso armor, looking gloomy at the damage incurred as even the main camera was sliced apart. Though they had made some emergency repairs, he wondered if they could return to the “General Revil” in this situation. Perhaps he should be relieved that the limbs were still intact.

Daryl's “Jesta” too floated by the side, looking to be in similar shape besides the still-functioning main camera. Nigel spotted the goggles watching the thruster flare. “You know where they're going?” and asked. (Got to be “Industrial 7”. There's no other place to go.) Daryl had already finished his emergency repairs and returned to the cockpit, his voice ringing through the wireless communicator.

(The “Nahel Argama” is also taking the same path. They're aiming for that place...)

“I guessed so. I get the feeling that we'll know more after getting there. Maybe that “Laplace Box” is still there.”

Nigel suddenly recalled Mineva Zabi's voice, and then he recalled the voice of Watts saying that there was one thing they had to do. (Are we going to meet up with the “Nahel Argama”?) He heard Daryl ask this amidst his bitterness, and murmured in his heart, *That impatient guy left without getting a girl who'll cry for him.* He looked up at the space that had devoured Watts' life, “Better not for now.” and answered with a sigh.

“Some things are to be watched and understood from afar. The “General Revil” should be arriving soon. Maintain our distance. We're approaching “Industrial 7”.”

(Understood. Can you move?)

“It can still move somehow, but this “Jesta” isn't going to last a beating from a psyco machine.”

It was embarrassing, but this was the lasting impression made during the battles over the past 2 hours. *We couldn't intervene in the battle between the “Unicorn” and the purple mobile suit, and we're chased out when the “Sinanju” just now. We got involved in that unknown light the “Unicorn” and the “Sinanju” gave off, and then we got bounced out of the battlefield.'*

He eavesdropped upon the wireless communicator, and it seemed to be called a psyco field. He did not know the result of the battle, and he was unsure of Full Frontal's fate, but he could not feel that immense killing intent. The difference in ability was so big he could not regret upon it, and his mind started to think about philosophical matters what is a spirit to sense each other, what those who have adapted themselves to space should do. *What will Watts think?* Nigel carelessly thought, his face contorted as he was unable to give a wry look at this. (There shouldn't be a problem here!) Daryl answered.

(The battle seemed to have ended. There's no Newtype that can fight the “Unicorn” in this space.)

The definite tone caused his tense face to relax somewhat. *Looks like I'm not the only one transformed..* Nigel turned towards Daryl's unit and asked, “Did you find the “Banshee”?” He was hoping that maybe he could sense Riddhe's presence, since he did sense the latter fighting the “Unicorn”. (There's too much debris...) Daryl however answered vaguely.

(The light from the psyco field vanished after that mysterious explosion. Is that...)

“Probably not. That...I'm not so sure what it is, but I'm guessing it's not Riddhe.”

The pressure he felt back then still lingered in his heart as a distant echo. It was the 'voice' of a woman, a 'voice' that was spread out along with a certain explosion soon after he had detected a battle between the “Banshee” and the “Unicorn”. *I'm able to access the situation coolly in my heart; maybe that's thanks to the 'voice' comforting my battered body and mind. We probably would have returned to the battlefield with revenge on our minds and ended up like Watts if that didn't happen.*

“Psyco field. Spirit...is it a field created by sous?”

He subconsciously muttered, and just when he was grimacing that it was unlike him, and noticed something flash by in the corner of his eye.

While the debris drifted in inertia, one lingering color was etched in his eyes as it flowed towards “Industrial 7”. It was merely the size of a pebble, and though the debris was too small to be clearly identified, that was--

“The Red Comet...?”

A red color appeared for an instant, basked under the moonlight, the remnant of what seemed to be a mobile suit gliding through the shoal space region. It quickly merged into the other debris, unable to be identified, into the darkness even the binoculars could not detect.

Volume 10 – Over the Rainbow, pt.2

Chapter 3[edit]

Part 1[edit]

The metallic walls kept sliding, covering the sky. After a relative distance of 2km, the space colony no longer resembled a building. The silver cylinder that had a little cyan to it flashed numerous warning lights, forever maintaining itself as a self operating planet--the 'world' that encompassed millions of lives within exerted its presence, on a similar level to the Earth and the moon, upon the people viewing it. Unlike the typical space colonies that are usually opened to the outside, this 'Industrial 7' space colony, shielded by a metallic wall, exerbated such a presence. A quarter length of this sealed colony was covered by a colony builder unit called the 'Rokuro', and the cylinder it was building floated in space silently, as though the chaos that happened within the past hour never existed. The zero gravity industrial area facing Earth was completely silent, with nary a transport ship nor a space shuttle to be seen. There were no lights of the linear cars traveling by, only the solar panels surrounding the space colony reflecting some light upon the cylinder.

"Even the subway's down...?"

To the people living within the inner walls of the cylinder, the linear

cars that run underground--the outer walls are the easiest way for the residents living inside the space colony to connect with the outside world. The linear cars stopped moving for some unnatural reason, and surely it had to be related with the current predicament. Feeling somewhat startled, Otto looked at the outer walls of 'Industrial 7'. Though located within the shoal region, the area around the space colony was cleared, and there were no signs of space debris to be seen from the bridge. The thoroughly battered 'Nahel Argama' silently wandered through the space that had no ships around, welding lights flashing as emergency repairs were made all over the ship.

"Port management remains silent. I'm guessing it's way more likely that the comms system are blocked by some way rather than them being hushed up. The residents living there are completely sealed inside."

Liam held the straw of the nutritional jelly with one hand as she commented, looking at the outer walls of the colony. It had been ten minutes since the air pressure within the ship was maintained with the assistance of the emergency response teams, and that orders were made for rations to be given to the entire crew. The mobile suits escorting the ship returned, and the relief after the prior perilous events left the atmosphere in the ship relaxed, but the abnormal situation of 'Industrial 7' isolated from the outside world triggered a new wave of uneasiness. Mihiro faced the communications panel, her petite body quivering, "Is it the work of Anaheim...the Vist Foundation?" she muttered, her face showing an anxiety completely different from a battle.

"It's possible...but it feels like there's a stronger force at work. Maybe it's the 'Magallanica' controlling the systems of the space colony."

Liam answered as she directed her stare beyond the ‘Rokuro’, where the colony faced the Moon. If the self-rotational residential area was the shell, and generated its own gravity through self-rotation like a colony, then shape of the ‘Magallanica’ itself could be described as similar to a horned snail. Otto finished the tasteless nutritional jelly as he stared at the rocky cliffs gathered upon the shell of the colony builder. The colossal structure extracted materials from the rocky plates formed upon the rotational residential area, along with the space debris floating nearby, creating a massive structure from the ‘Rokuro’. This structure, possessing the power to create a ‘world’, remained silent along with ‘Industrial 7’. The docking bay within the cylindrical core remained in lockdown, and there was no response despite many calls. Warning lights at various places continued to flicker regularly, but there were faint lights blinking at the windows of the bridge located at the head of the snail, and one could not dismiss the notion that the

shell was completely empty.

Previously, they managed to enter through Alberto's word, but it seemed not to be the case this time. If it did contain the 'Laplace Box', there might be several traps or defensive installations designed to fight off intruders. Otto's eyes drifted towards the Type-94 Base Jabber approaching the docking bay. Conroy and the ECOAS vanguard were riding upon it, managed to meet the 'Unicorn', the latter merely a little speck compared to the 'Magallanica' as it drifted in a corner of the screen. The white frame of the 'Unicorn' was kneeling there, looking down at the massive gates of the docking bay, and to a bystander, it resembled a heavily-armored knight of the Middle Ages facing the gates. This master of the city had passed through many tribulations, and finally returned with the key to open the 'box'—

"Return of the King, huh…?"

He blurted out, and Liam turned to look at him in surprise, "Is there any movements from the 'Magallanica'?" Otto asked Mihiro,

"Nothing. The ECOAs tried to enter, but it seemed the airlock was shut off. They said it's likely they'll have to burn it down with a burner."

"No other choice. Can't turn back now when we've come this far. What about our pursuers?"

"Density of the Minovsky particles is decreasing. No signs of the Neo Zeon fleet approaching on the optical sensors."

The sensor operator answered. "Our friendlies?" Though knowing it sounded sarcastic from him, Otto asked,

"It appears the fleet stationed by the Moon has taken action. Also, while beyond our range, we have detected trackers coming from the Moon. The forces that sent in the second 'Unicorn' unit."

The intentional voice from the sensor operator caused Otto, who was exchanging looks with Liam, to look over to Mihiro. "Any response from Ensign Riddhe after that?" Otto asked, "Nothing." And Mihiro answered with a softer voice.

"A communicator can probably reach him. Keep calling…Ensign Mihiro, reach out for him with your words."

After adding on to his words with his look, "Yes…" Mihiro softly responded, and went back to work on the operator. The wireless signal from the 'Banshee' was not the only thing she received. She heard his 'voice'. Otto repeated the many 'voices' he heard, once again experiencing a surreal feeling he was unsure off, stood away from the

Captain’s seat, and looked towards the window.

That ‘voice’, turbulent like a storm, was no longer around. After a torrent of madness, a terrifying silence of space engulfed the ‘Nahel Argama’. The vacuum of endless darkness engulfed Lieutenant Marida, along with the lives of many. Ensign Riddhe, who had lost his way and was drifting around, was also in this darkness—

“Is that alright? He is an enemy who attacked us.”

Liam stood by Otto’s side, asking with a volume only audible to him. He turned his eyes towards her,

“Vice Captain, you did hear it, didn’t you? That ‘voice’.”

“…It sounded like he’s crying.” Liam immediately averted her eyes sheepishly, only to posture a hardened stance back at him, “But, that has no—”

“I know.

“I know. There is nothing to prove it's reality. If that's caused by the resonance of the psycoframes, our position requires us to doubt if the enemy predicted this and used it to jam our signals." "Yeah."

"But at the same time, there's no proof that it isn't reality."

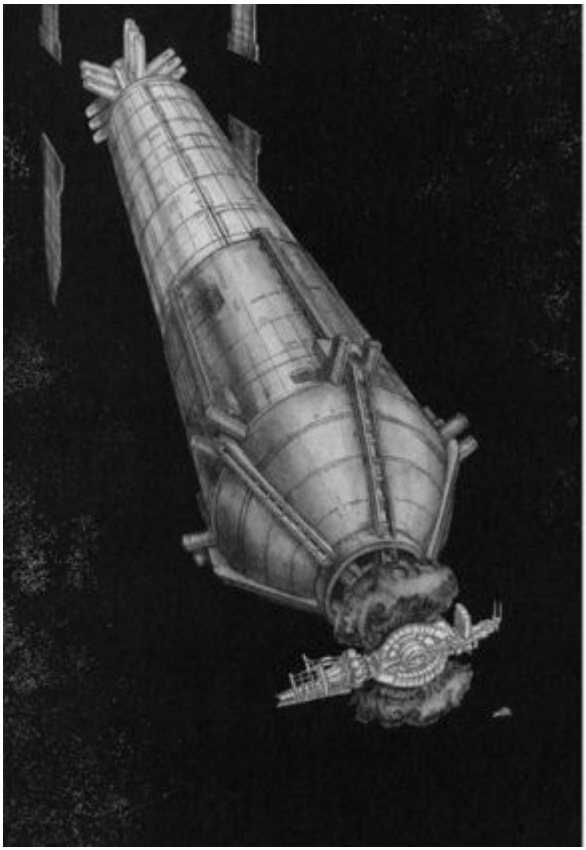
Otto could hear Liam gulp down the urge to argue back, and turned his sights outside. Once again, he closed his eyes, the mysterious lights flickering within his eyes returning to darkness. "We've come this far." He said silently.

"I'm not going to ask everyone to believe blindly, but we shouldn't decide with our old-fashioned minds, lest we miss out on many important things in this critical moment."

Liam's little snort was the answer, and Otto stared at her sidelong face, her silence affirming that answer. He exhaled, and looked back at the "Magallanica"

"We can only accept what has happened. Before us is a secret that can topple the world "

"Something's happening to the "Magallanica"!"



A shout suddenly occurred, and the sadness from before instantly vaporized. While every bridge member froze, "What's going on?" Liam's voice echoed through the space. Otto hurriedly returned to the captain seat, "It's the docking bay. The space hatch opened!" and once the sensor operator responded, he hastily looked to the monitor.

Like an old-fashioned shutter camera from ages before, the circular-shaped wings of metallic plates slowly slid away. Otto stared at the visuals sent from the dispatch team, along with the "Magallanica", "Any other movements?" muttering away, "No changers...no, beacon's signalling". The officer reported. "No response in the commns. Command block is quiet." Mihiro's voice came. The gates were open at this time, little beacons of last flicking on the transmitted footage..

"ECOAS said they're going in to investigate."

"Let them go. Our fleet will approach the "Magallanica", and keep watch on the perimeter."

Otto gave the order without hesitation, and stared at the slightly blurred visuals. The port had scars from the battle a month ago, but it did not

look any different from before. Beyond the space gate was the central port, along with the docks for massive ships, and beyond that partition was the industrial block forming the core of the "Magallanica". Was someone controlling within? Or that the "Magallanica" recognized the return of its owner? In any case, there was no shop docked at the central, and neither was there working personnel. The base jabber continued to ferry the "Unicorn" slightly through the round gates. The vast space of the port was magnified on the monitors, and once the contrast adjusted to the darkness, one could see scorch marks all over the walls.

"…Let's go in a look."

Otto's little blurt had Liam raising an eyebrow, "Captain?" Otto didn't look away from the monitor as he continued, "If the port facilities can still be used, we can use it for emergency repairs."

"The "Nahel Argama" is at its limit. It can't fight against any pursuers. If we get in before the port closes, the "Magallanica" can act as a shield."

"Is that so…"

"It's equally dangerous to stay here. I want to make sure that we can remain as safe as possible."

Both sides knew well that their ships could barely remain airtight. Neither could expect their fighting strength to recover. Liam herself had no desire for more casualties, her eyes giving a look of agreement, "Wait." but another voice interrupted them.

"If we all enter now, our external surveillance will weaken. We should stay and wait for the "Unicorn"."

Zimmerman stomped in through the bridge door, bellowing. "Captain…" Liam's response was terse, probably worried that Zimmerman was still highly affected by the destruction of the "Kshatriya". Nevertheless, the former was unperturbed as he went to the captain seat with eyes upon him. "I just checked on the situation", he said with a relieved look, and Otto stared back into the eyes that had seemingly washed away their anguish and hesitation.

"The emergency team is working hard. We're back to a state where we can duke it out with the Zeon ships."

"But there's a limit to how much we can repair in vacuum. We have to recover till full strength as much as possible while the 'Sleeves' aren't able to move—"

"The "Rewloola" is still out there."

He responded, giving a look to Otto who had apparently forgotten about this. "The Federation has been dragging their toes, and I'm concerned about that too." he continued, drifting towards the window.

"They might be thinking of how to eliminate us all at once. It's best for the ship to remain outside, so that no matter what happens, we can deal with it as best as we can."

"I know that logic…"

"Marida told me that."

The eyes looking over the shoulder were giving off a clear light, stinging into Otto's heart. "Something's aiming for us." While Otto was still speechless, Zimmerman continued,

"We'll wait for the "Unicorn". It's time for us as adults to protect him."

He looked into the void, his eyes withstanding everything despite not having lost everything. If they were to remain defensive, all their sacrifices would be in vain. Now is the time for us to step up, is that what you're saying? Otto muttered as he looked at the back of the one who sacrificed more than anyone else, before looking over to the "Unicorn" that was gradually sucked into the "Magallanica".

The bonfire-like beacon lights flickered, guiding the white armor through its city gates. Judgment has arrived, so this thought suddenly occurred, causing Otto goosebumps.

Part 2[edit]

The many feathers gathered in a circle slowly closed as they opened. The hole leading to the outside world shrank, concealing the light beacons and the white frame of the "Nahel Argama" drifting in space.

"The hatch is closing. Can we still make contact?"

Conroy's voice came from the Type 94 Base Jabber behind. '"Actuator, confirmed." Banagher heard Lieutenant Gariety's voice as he turned his eyes left and right. The spacious spaceport swallowed the "Unicorn" and the base jabber, filling the vision of the all view monitor. He saw the charred marks of the beam rifle, back at the 500m wide rectangular space, and the partition gate slid apart. The space behind the gate seemingly invited them in, and was relatively dim compared to the port. There should be some docks for massive ships, but the lighting was heavily dimmed.

"Is someone controlling it?"

"No, looks like it's a machine response. Did the "Magallanica" systems identify the "Unicorn"? Looks like we can only go in."

Banagher heard the conversation between Conroy and Gael, passing through the partition wall large enough for the "Nahel Argama" to pass through. The first impression he had of this place was the scorched hole. Most of the lighting was faulty, unable to illuminate the port, along with the cranes that had collapsed and drifted in space; all of these were scars of the battle a month ago. The partition gate too had a hole, but it was patched up, with signs of the bare minimal repairs involving air pressure.

It appeared the drones had executed repairs. The hole however was covered with new steel, and Banagher recalled it being the mark the "Unicorn" punctured through, the hole he made that instant when he was tossed into the cockpit without knowing what was going on, just trying to eliminate Marida's "Kshatriya".

There were similar, obvious looking patch marks. Opposite it was an industrial block, along with the hangar of the “Unicorn”. Was that man’s corpse lying somewhere in this darkness? The new memories suddenly filled Banagher’s heart, his hand on the joystick frozen. However, another hand reaching from the side was placed on his. The warmth reached him through the glove, as though siphoning away the extra strength.

Audrey leaned forward from the co-pilot seat, gently nodding to him. Her eyes were affirming to him, I am here, and he nodded back, suppressing his rising feelings as he looked forward. The latch behind them closed, and the massive wall before them began to slide. The ‘Base Jabber’ remained on standby, and on Conroy’s command, the two “Lotos” accompanying it accelerated, moving before the “Unicorn”.

The ECOAS special units had transformed into mobile suits, and passed the partition into the next block. The 920 wielding the anti-aircraft machine gun on the right shoulder was occupied by Conroy and the others, while the 729 “Loto” with the gatling gun was one boarded by Gael. The “Unicorn” followed the two 12m tall units, passed through the doors, and the hatch 200m wide began to close. The four walls concealed the Base Jabber, the flowing winds pelting upon the “Unicorn”. As the winds continued to shuffle from everywhere, Banagher descended to the bridge with the “Lotos” flanking him.

Air was gushing in and filling the massive space, allowing for the booster thrusters and mobile frames to be heard in the cockpit, along with many others. Banagher’s ears were long used to the vacuum, and

while feeling a sharp pain from the air, he let the “Unicorn” advance to the partition. The “Loto” hooked their feet anchors into the grooves of the ground, allow their brown units to move forward. The air finished filling before the three units arrived at the partition, so large it dwarfed the mobile suits as it slowly slid aside.

Before them was the industrial block that was always filled with air. The space looked extremely dark, a forest of steel formed by countless overlapping cranes and conveyor belts. Most of them were violently severed, their charred remains floating in zero gravity, the WIP materials drifting in the darkness. Naturally, there was no functioning facility, and all communications with “Industrial 7” seemed to have ceased. There appeared to be nary any human activity, let alone repair works. There were piles of cold debris in the bottomless darkness, and a time-stopping silence roamed in the core of the”Magallanica”.

They would see the “Laplace Box” at the end of this darkness. There was a warmth lingering in his chest, neither fear nor excitement, as he looked through this wasteland of an industrial block. The 729 on the shoulder took a step forward. “There’s an elevator to the gravity area”, so Gael said.

“There’s probably a cargo lift for mobile suits to use. Let’s go.”

The 729 “Loto” pushed aside the twisted debris with its manipulator, moving further in. While the “Unicorn” tailed it, the 920 “Loto” advanced with footsteps ringing. “Don’t let your guard down”. Conroy’s tense voice echoed through the wireless. The three units spaced themselves sufficiently such that they would not be shot at once, advancing through the dim industrial block. Banagher raised the Beam Magnum, currently with two rounds, and advanced while making sure the unit did not deviate off course.

‘There’s the hiding place of Vist Foundation founder beneath this mansion…a cryo room? I can believe it exists, but I don’t understand why it does.”

Conroy’s tentative murmur echoed through the wireless as they passed the industrial block and reached the path leading to the elevator block. “You mean?” Gael answered.

“The construction of the “Magallanica” is by itself part of the Founder’s plans, but even though the plans that were leaked, I don’t understand why he hid his residence in such a simple place like a basement. That woman called Martha had checked through all the Foundation’s facilities thorough, right”

“You searched through the mansion during your prior operation, but you found nothing.”

“That is true…”

“There are blind spots, like the bottom of a lamp, and features not easily detected. It’s not wrong to say it is beneath the mansion, but not completely correct.”

Conroy did not respond further to Gael’s deliberately obfuscated words. The three units arrived at the elevator block, and stopped before the spiral doors the size of a mobile suit.

Their current position was located at the core of the rotating residence area, and they descended at least 500m down the elevator. The gravity block was located within the inner walls of the ‘snail’ shell, and within it was the mansion the Vist family transported from Earth. Banagher pressed the button using the mechanical arm protruding from the elbow,. The 729 “Loto” had boarded, and moved aside to let the “Unicorn” in. The 920 “Loto” took a step back, “We’ll wait here.” Conroy’s voice came through the wireless.

“Banagher, keep communicating, and no matter what happens, deal with it calmly. Don’t forget, we got your back covered.”

The guiding voice was truly Conroy’s way of guidance. Banagher felt a little relaxed, “Yes”, and replied thus. The spiral gates closed, and the elevator began to descend. The 920 “Loto” instantly flowed upwards, and once the elevator doors shielded their vision, all that were left were fleeting lights at regular intervals.

“I can’t say that I know everything. This “Magallanica” is managed by the organization directly affiliated to the leader. Even the colony management familiar with Master Cardeas has no idea of the actual layout.”

The weight of gravity bore upon the blood pressure along with the descending ceiling. Banagher had the “Unicorn” turn its head about, looking down at the “Loto” that was merely as tall as the “Unicorn” waist.

“If Master Cardeas had not informed me of this failsafe, even I would not have known about this cryo. The Founder himself has equivalent value to the “Box” given his knowledge of all the secrets.”

So he had to spend his life fending against assassins? Banagher sensed another reason why his blood pressure rose, muttering, “Founder of the Vist Foundation…Syam Vist.” This seemingly

unacquainted name resonated with Alberto's words, the man who killed his own son. "He is your great-grandfather." Gael continued, but every single fact was so hard to accept, the fragmented words merely dancing in Banagher's heart.

"I'm not going to say what kind of person he is. Do determine with your own eyes. What I can say now is my guess, the "Laplace Box" is with Master Syam. I never thought the cryo and the 'box' would be at the same place, but since the La+ Program points to this place, I can't think of any other. Looking at the simple structure of the cryo, I don't think there's an additional place to hide"

"A secret hidden within a secret. He lived a hundred years using such a dangerous thing like cryo…"

Audrey muttered with amazement and pity. The emotion Banagher had once gulped rose again, "That has nothing to do with this." And he retorted with a stiff voice,

"Many…too many have died. If that thing is not worth the sacrifice…"

The heat being suppressed in the heart was scorching his organs, tormenting him to the point of breathlessness. Banagher could sense Audrey being tentative to tell him something as he kept staring at the lights flowing down to up. A little while later, the lights stopped, and another dazzling light filled the all-view monitor. The spacious artificial air and earth of the gravity block revealed itself before the "Unicorn".

The ceiling 200m tall or so was projecting blue skies and clouds, and one could see a large arching grassland from above. Despite this, it was a dazzling sight to the eyes that had just trevassed the vacuum battlefield, the vibrant colors and lights melting away all tension at once. The elevator slid through the transparent, plastic well, slowly landing upon the gravity block covered in plantation. Banagher felt slightly dizzy as he was unaccustomed to the sudden change in visuals, and the elevator, having arrived at the lowest level, let out a dull metallic buzz.

The spiral hatch opened, and the "Unicorn" exited the elevator, taking a large step forward. The empty space before the elevator was trampled upon, and there were grass patches to the flanks of the barren dirt road. It seemed they had arrived at a more distant block, for the Vist residence was nowhere to be seen. A flock of birds, probably terrified by the footsteps of the two large giants, left the trees and flew into the artificial sky in a unified arch. It was a month ago when Banagher met Audrey; his memories of the encounter awoke as he basked in that fresh greenness for the time being.

His hair was a little longer, and physically, he was no different. However, he was a completely different person in terms of how he viewed things, and how he rationalized them. He could not comprehend how it affected it, “We’ll wait here.” So Gael said, the miniature “Loto” behind Banagher taking a step back.

“Please guide the “Unicorn” forward. The seal of the La+ Program has been released. You should be able to get a reaction by going close.”

Gael did not hint further, for he probably was still servient to Cardeas, and swore to keep the cryo a secret. The “Unicorn” would determine its most appropriate pilot, and lead the way to “Laplace Box”. Banagher recalled the words Cardeas said, exchanged nods with Audrey, opened the throttles, and stepped on the pedal.

The thruster jets blew upon the still “Loto”. The “Unicorn” stomped off the ground, racing through the short blue sky. Banagher watched the altimeter as he stuck close to the ceiling, descending and hopping whenever he saw an empty space, moving through the round, donut-like scenery. Looking down from above, he saw that there were more empty spaces than he had assumed. The were empty spaces before the elevators spaced apart regularly, along with the forests and grassland. There were paths big enough for large trucks to pass through. The forest boundaries were clearly trimmed, and there were artificial objects wherever he landed. These were likely to be portholes, shared tunnels that would provide supplies to any places with signs of life.

“Banagher, this is…”

“Yeah…this isn’t an ordinary space. Feels like it’s designed to be capable of holding an additional warehouse or school or large facility.”

Banagher nearly blurted out words like base or barracks or the like, but swallowed it back as he looked forward. There was a foundation to rebuild the world after the ‘box’ was opened. He recalled Gael’s words as Cardeas’ dreams unfolded before him, and he felt a slight chill. Beyond the holographic clouds, the Vist family’s mansion appeared.

The trimmed garden and the Earth-weathered artificial stone structures were exactly the same as they were during his last visit a month ago. Banagher saw a driveway at the porch, “We’re landing”, and had the “Unicorn” descend before Audrey could not. The short bursts of the thrusters caused the unit to decelerate and descend in an arch. The “Unicorn” landed while facing the house, captured by gravity as its feet sank into the porch, the thruster winds blowing upon the garden.

The little shrubs in the garden swayed slightly, the water bursting from the fountain splashing apart. The windows shook, but not massively so for this 100m building. Despite being a three storey building, each level was extraordinarily tall, the roof taller than the “Unicorn”. Looking over from the main camera in the head, he could see the sculpture right above the main entrance, the clock in the middle pointing to 11.30pm.

The windows curtains were all pulled down, and there was no presence to be felt. Banagher wondered if there would be anyone welcoming them in, “Shall we go…?” Audrey asked, and they exchanged looks, but the main monitor suddenly showed the “La+” words, and Banagher felt a gust rising from beneath his feet, striking his shull

You found it?

The gust became a voice, flashing through his forehead as a light. The kind voice sounded so familiar. Who is it? So Banagher quietly called out, but the visuals on the all-view monitors vanished, and the cockpit fell into brief darkness. Banagher instinctively grabbed Audrey’s hand, and when a screen was switched on again, he saw a picture.

There was a lady standing before a little tent, putting her jewellery into the box of a waiting lady. Flanking her sides with a unicorn and a lion, pulling the entrance aside as they raised their front legs, inviting her in. It was no simple painting; every pattern and animal on the crimson background was stitched on the cloth. These were the six tapestries, the last of them depicting the lady and the unicorn together…Banagher recalled the words Cardeas said to him, that the other five tapestries symbolized the human five senses, and nobody knew what the last called the 'tent' meant. That person told him that as they did not know, they had to draw, to think, to seek the unspeakable knowledge and truth, and to understand the meaning of the ancient words 'à mon seul désir'.

"My only desire…"

The 'voice' that had asked if he had found it permeated through his body again, exploding in light. Banagher could not answer except for an inexplicable expression as he stared at the 'tent', and there was a heavy rumbling rising from beneath his feet.

It was not the "Unicorn" trembling, but the plates of the gravity block. The earthquake tremor shook the unit, the auto balancers twirling their bodies around, the strong gusts blowing loudly on the external amplifiers. "Banagher…"Audrey groaned, and Banagher grabbed her hand as he stared at the tapestry broadcasted on the all-view monitors. The tent opened before the lady was shaking, as though there was a darkness swallowing secrets rumbling away.

Part 3[edit]

It all started before a familiar man made a call.

'You really haven't improved at all. You're the commander of Londo Bell, and you still can't negotiate with the politicians? Any soldier in this situation should be looking for a senator to help and prepare for elections now, are you?"

Kai Shiden was never one to mince his words, and in the same phone call, briefed three issues. First, Senator Ronan Marcenas had summoned him to Dakar, trying to involve him in the political conflict against the Vist Foundation. Second, the senator mentioned Bright by name in an attempt to gain leverage. Finally, this current senator was so desperate to deal with the "Laplace Box", it seemed the military and the Senate were planning to end it once and for all, in a certain manner, though half of that last point was conjecture.

As a reporter, all Kai could do was to discern through the state of the world, but he, who had served alongside Bright on “White Base”, would never say such empty conjectures. Bright made a few phone calls to affirm the information provided, and though he was reassigned, they could not cut off his contacts altogether. His deputy Meran was still on the ”Ra Cailum” that was under repair, and through his assistance, he grasped the situation without the assistance of Luio & Co, to whom he owed a huge favor to.

It became widely known that Martha led several of the highest ranking senators into the migration council. Through the defense forces of Dakar, Bright learned that she dragged Ronan out of the senate onto a private flight to Cheyenne Base in North America, but no further clues. What were the leaders of the Vist Foundation and the Settlement Issues Council planning to do, hiding in the Cheyenne Base that was a relic of the old century? Bright had no means of contacting the ”Nahel Argama”, and it seemed there was limited information on what he could convey verbally. Thus, he chose the reckless action of taking the flight prepared by the temporary commander of Londo Bell towards the scene.

Using his reputation as the captain of the ”White Base”, hero of the One Year War, he broke through the security perimeter with various hasty excuses like ‘emergency support’, ‘don’t you know who I am’, and practically barged into the control room, seeing a massive monitor clearly displaying their conspiracy. There were “Industrial 7”, the “Nahel Argama”, and the infamous colony laser of the Gryps Conflict. Behind the communication officers at the controls, Ronan and Martha were scowling away, the base commander in name hastily checking on the battle and their faces. Bright was in no mood to check the tanned face of Commander Aidres, nor did he look at a stunned looking Martha. Instead, he stared intently at the unflinching Ronan, whose back was turned on him

Bright tidied the collar that was messed from tussling with the guards, flattened his hair, and with a calm voice, he spoke once again, “What’s going on?” Ronan continued to face the monitor, unfazed.

“I didn’t know the colony laser was repaired, let alone directing it at a civilian colony—”

“We shall limit its damage to the minimum, only at the “Magallanica”. It is under the colony management committee, but it is still property of the Vist Foundation”

Martha spoke up for the unmoving Ronan. “And so you have the right to destroy it?” Bright retorted, leaving Martha to ruffle her hair with an

impatient look, turning away to look at the monitor behind her. Bright then pointed to the high seat of the commander, “This is clearly illegal”, pointingly directing his words at Aibres.

“Cease firing immediately. If you refuse, I shall report.”

“Captain Bright, this is an emergency measure to maintain our security, and approved after much planning. Please leave this room. You are now illegally interfering with classified military information and command. ”

“What excuse are you using to appeal to the public this time!? Are you going to burn down a colony because it contains secrets that threaten the Federation!? This is what Zeon and the Titans did!”

“You are the cause of this situation.”

Aibres’ nonchalant expression was almost at its limit, and Martha turned back, causing Bright to turn back to her as though he was checkmated.

“It’s you who allowed the “Unicorn” and Mineva Zabi to escape, and rendezvous with the “Nahel Argama”. The nerve of you to say such words when our options were taken. ”

“The premise of this was that you are not allowed to interfere with the military. I’m just going along with the situation.”

“Yes. You act on emotions; unlike us, who act to maintain the necessary order. ”

Her eyes and voice had Bright momentarily doubting if he was in the wrong. “We are not taking this lightly.” She continued without a pause, now turning towards Bright.

“Correcting things will simply crumble the entire system, and collapse the world order. You have family too, no? How about you be smarter and think for your children’s sake?”

“I just want to be a father who won’t bring shame to my own children.”

Even in the clash of words, Bright had no intention to budge, causing Martha to look increasingly heinous. “Seriously…men are truly unreasonable creatures.” So she muttered, her devious tone causing Bright to shiver.

“Such vanity and expression of ego is the source of all conflicts. Why have you not realized? Humans are conceited, thinking they can do better, to have whatever they want, and walked down the wrong path.

Are we do is to develop knowledge to mitigate the fragileness of the flesh, no different from other creatures. All we need to do is to simply repeat the cycles of life and death. There is no need to do foolish things like murdering each other. We should be content with whatever we can reach …"

Bright saw Martha's fingertips tense up as they twirled her bangs. She was not directly those words at him, but to a certain person who was not present, and Bright stared at her sidelong face while withholding his trepidation.

"But it is difficult for men who live in such ways…the males of humanity, to do so. While there were some tendencies towards the feminine in the old age, the males have forgotten their lessons once they got to space, and repeated their mistakes again. For the females to be the rulers is—"

"Madam Martha, this isn't a good place to debate."

Ronan suddenly spoke, and Martha's seemingly possessed eyes shivered. She blinked, seemingly oblivious to her whereabouts, and recovered, muttering, "…Yes. My apologies." Bright stared at the unexpected response of the leader of the Vist Foundation, realizing that she was not just a woman coveting power. However, he immediately diverted his eyes towards Ronan, whose back was facing him.

He was the only one Bright could have a proper conversation with. "Senator Ronan." Ronan turned his massive neck slightly in response to Bright's words.

"I shall contact the"Nahel Argama" and expedite the situation. Please do not be hasty to decide. We should be able to contact them directly through relay satellites given the facilities here. "

"And what will you do after contacting them? Tell them that the colony laser is aimed at them?"

Ronan turned back, his eyes basically lamenting, I would have done so if it was me. That stare had Bright dumbfounded, before it looked aside, "It appears no advice will work." He quipped with a blank look.

"One single ship tore its way through the Neo Zeon fleet, reaching its destination. They probably acted without knowing what the contents of the 'Box' is…as I said, the choice is theirs, not ours."

"But…!"

"Nevertheless, they will be dumbfounded to see the true identity of the

’Box’. ”

The slightly lowered sidelong face was filled with the self-deprecation of one who understood the truth. Bright remained speechless, and Ronan looked at him, before looking over at Martha watching with bated breath, before looking over at “Industrial 7” on the monitor.

“By itself, it has no value, and there is nothing impressive about knowing it. But we have to admit that the moment we recognize its existence, the Federation will collapse. We cannot let the ‘Box’ open, not in this reality where the ‘possibility’ of Newtypes exist…”

Bright could not understand what he was saying. No, his instincts were telling that if he knew, there would be no turning back, and that left him speechless, taking a step back as he trembled in fear. Martha’s eyes narrowed, her eyes showing a dim light, seemingly realizing something. “Is it…” the moment she spoke, “target’s showing anomaly!” the operator yelled, causing the mood in the room to freeze.

“Expand the visual.” Aibres said. One of the six monitors showed an expanded live visual of “Industrial 7”. Connected at an end of the long, narrow cylinder was the colony builder, the “Magallanica” primed as the target of the colony laser by the personnel at this base. Bright stared at the visuals that were constantly being corrected by CG, becoming clearer, looking as though there was magic causing him to blink constantly.

Atop the long and slim main body exceeding 6,500 meters was the residential block shaped like a snail snail. Its ring slowed down greatly, as though snared by something. The ring with diameter exceeding 1,600 meters spun in the opposite direction from the exterior impact belt 50m thick, negating the rotational torque, and causing it to stop. “The gravity block…”“Is it stopping?” Bright stared at the large monitor in cold sweat. The gravity block no smaller than a massive space colony stopped in its tracks, and to any Spacenoids, it was akin to a planet ceasing to revolve. The centrifugal force was gone, preventing all lifeforms from moving; it was similarly destructive to a hole punctured in a colony’s outer walls.

It was not the only change however, as the inner cylinder that had once stopped began to spin in the opposite direction. The exterior impact belt too spun, half of what the cylinder did, like a safe deposit box code of the past. The double ring structure kept spinning and stopping, the massive snail structure changing massively.

“What’s going on!?”

“The revolving residential block is moving irregularly ”

“I know that! Investigate the reason”

Aibres roared with all his might. Bright did not look over at the perturbed comms operator, but towards Martha standing next to her. He had expected her to have some anticipation of this, that she would unabashedly declare the “Magallanica” to be possession of the Foundation. However, she merely looked up at the monitor skeptically. The white dot of the “Nahel Argama” continued to drift at the docking bay, located in the core as the residential block continued to spin. This strange motion continued to spin and stop, as though unlocking a tip of the colony itself—

“Is the seal broken…?”

Ronan groaned as he stared at the anomaly happening 300,000km away. With a look of trepidation, Bright stared at the monitor intently.

Part 4[edit]

The gusts within the gravity block hammered away at the “Unicorn”, the water of the severed fountain blowing down, the forests surrounding the Vist residence, the trees too rumbled, the windows shaking, almost sounding like they were about to break, the noises echoing throughout the porch..

Banagher, having climbed out of the cockpit and was about to descend the simple ladder, was met with an unexpectedly strong gust of wind, causing him to be blown back and pinned onto the “Unicorn” No artificial installation could have caused such a massive gale, nothing would have, except for a breach in the outer wall. Letting air escape into vacuum—

“You’re saying this will happen every time?”

“Yes. Once the gravity block stops revolving, the air will move on inertia, and the cryo…will…’

The howling noises of the wind jammed the signal, and Banagher could not hear Conroy and Gael’s words completely, “Mr Gael!” Banagher called. “Banagher, look!” But Audrey’s voice rang, and he looked into the cockpit.

“The fountain’s water…!”

The all-view monitor covered the cockpit, showing the fountain behind the “Unicorn”. The water spewing out was scattered aside into countless droplets, and the basin receiving the water was throbbing

like jelly. “Has gravity weakened?” banagher muttered, and clearly felt the force weaken on his body. The residential block stopped spinning, resulting in loss of gravity, and the air that flowed became strong gales, but what did that have to do with the cryo? The tremors at the feet continued, and as Banagher looked around with skeptical eyes, “Oh…!” Audrey’s sudden cry had him jolted.

“It’s like an old styled rotary lock. This revolving residential block is a double structure.”

“A double structure?”

“There’s another residential area outside of where we are, and normally, both sides spin in different directions. They only stop when the cryo’s going to open, so the entrances in the outside block and here are connected. ”

Is she referring to the impact belt? After some thought, “Is the cryo in the outer block?” Banagher figured it out “Probably.” Audrey answered, passing through the cockpit hatch.

“Both sides usually move in opposite directions, so that side’s moving quickly at relative velocity underground. It’s not wrong to say that it’s beneath the house, but not completely incorrect either…they couldn’t find the cryo, because it’s not at a single place. ”

Banagher shielded Audrey from the incoming gales, looking at his feet. The gravity block of the ”Magallanica” was half the size of a typical colony, revolving at 200km per hour. If the cryo was located in the impact belt revolving in the other direction, it would mean it was revolving beneath this gravity block at a high relative velocity. Only when both blocks stopped, when the house was connected to the cryo, would the door leading there open. “Mr Gael!” Audrey exclaimed, ignoring Banagher as he finally understood this.

“Where is the entrance to the cryo? We have to hurry in while it’s still connected…!”

The noise got dire, fudging Gael’s usual voice… “The seal of the ‘Box’…is opened…” Banagher stared at the wall that was no more than 10maway from him, then at the second floor window pelted by the wind. The shut window was shaking, probably because the wind had seeped through the gap, like the seals were slowly being unraveled—

“…Over there. ”

The tapestry image he imagined shot through his mind as an instinct of firm belief. “Banagher?” Audrey lifted her head, and Banagher held her

hand, taking a step out of the cockpit, looking at the front entryway of the house at his feet. Luckily, the wind was blowing towards the residence, and the “Unicorn” would shield them as they went down. “Let’s go.” So Banagher said with this thought, and Audrey held his hand, nodding firmly, looking towards the front entryway. He cupped her shoulder, held his breath, and stepped off the cockpit hatch.

With his head looking down to the ground, Banagher went down the machine. Though they were caught in the currents, but he and Audrey stomped off the “Unicorn” knee, practically rolling into the corridor before the entryway. They were in no mood to check the door rings shaped as lions, and nudged aside the unlocked doors, shoved in by the gales, passing through the entryway before their feet could land.

The air they scented upon was the same as it was a month ago, the icy scent lifted by the incoming gales, causing the grand chandeliers hanging upon the high ceilings to sway slightly. As they drifted as though they were upon an alien spaceship drifting in space, Banagher removed his helmet, and before he could call for Audrey, she called out, “I know. That one, isn’t it?” She closed the door, hopped off the floor, and drifted with the momentum into the corridor. Banagher gave chase after the spacesuit that showed no hesitation, kicking his legs towards the room.

They passed the entryway, glancing aside at the garden with various sculptures, and moved along the long corridor. They entered the connected building, made a trn, went down another corridor, and arrived at the tall room with six tapestries. Banagher was driven by the memories of this residence a month ago—no, the days he spent living here much earlier, and walked towards the mahogany doors. There was no other place he remembered. Within this room, his mother was playing the piano, his father’s voice narrating about the depictions of the tapestries. He opened the heavy doors with bated breath, and his legs weakened as he saw the scenery before him.

There was the wall with the six tapestries hanging upon them, along with the grand piano placed in a corner. It was no different from his memories.

The photo fame atop the piano had Alberto and his mother giving seemingly reproaching looks at the intruders, but it was not the reason why his legs were buckling. Suddenly protruding in the room was a conical, tent-like thing resembling the tapestry. The stone structure three meters tall opened a dark hole, probably leading to the underground. It appeared to be a structure lying underground, floating up as the changes occurred in the gravity block. While Banagher was

mentally prepared for this, he was momentarily unable to process this development, and cautiously stepped into the room with his heart throbbing wildly.

Atop the conical structure were the embossed words ‘A Mon Seul Desir’. This structure akin to the ‘tent’ was too dark, and large enough for a person to pass through, but there did not appear to be stairs leading to the underground. Faced with this opening of the darkness, Banagher and Audrey exchanged looks. The latter’s emerald eyes were saying that they had to do, and Banagher nodded back, took a deep breath, and leapt into the darkness. For a moment, he felt himself floating in the air, and then there was the roar of a beat, the two of them instantly sucked underground, a falling sensation engulfing them.

It was not that gravity had returned. One could sense a shaft, or a similar machine, being activated, pulling them down. Unable to see anything in the darkness, Banagher grabbed Audrey’s hand to his chest, shriveling as much as he could to endure the fear of falling. The entrance above his head instantly vanished, and they were probably tugged around in the tunnel. He had lost all sense of direction, not knowing whether he was going down or up. They were moving at high speeds down the dark corridor, the wind pressure delivering them further into the abyss.

A minute later, or shorter, the sensation suddenly stopped, and both of them were tossed into darkness devoid of noise. They stared at the darkness, their eyes not blinking. Soon after, there was a weak light by their feet, lights forming one after another, drawing a straight line. At the same time, the lights on both walls to the sides were lit, and only then did they realize they were floating on a narrow path.

There was a wall behind him, the floor and ceiling showing no signs of an exit. There was only a metal door at the very end of this windowless path, and they had no idea where they were, how they got here. Having witnessed this pitch dark space, Banagher and Audrey exchanged looks, their elbows hitting the wall. Once they touched, the gravity bogged their bodies down, their floating bodies dragged to the floor.

“Gravity has returned…”

“This is the outer block…isn’t it?”

It was half a G, but the sudden gravity left them with the heaviness of flesh and blood being ripped from their bodies. Holding themselves up, their feet stepped on the lit path as they once again looked at the metal door 30 meters away, blocking their path. This was the cryo room of

the Vist Foundation's leader, where the "Laplace Box" rested. They grabbed each other's shoulders, their palms showing tension as they gulped, before they gingerly took the first step forward.

The lights vanished one after another as they walked on, the path behind them erased by the darkness. Since gravity had occurred again, the spinning function of the residential block should be back to normal, and there was no option to return to the Vist residence. Seemingly pursued by the darkness, Banagher stopped before the slightly curved door. The final light extinguished, and the door slid aside like a sigh. Beyond it was a space as pitch dark as the path, the returning darkness covering their eyes.

"I've been waiting for a long time."

There was a voice coming from deep within the darkness, the echoing voice seemed to imply a massive space. Their shoulders shook, their still bodies frozen in place.

"All to tell you one thing."

A weak light seeped through, stinging the eyes already used to the darkness. Countless silver lights were flickering, and one could tell those were stars of the galaxy. There was nothing distinguishing the floor, walls and ceiling, all everything within the eyes was an endless sea of stars, that one would have a feeling of being tossed into space. With Audrey's shoulder as his only vantage point, Banagher took a firm step on the floor he could not see. The door slammed shut behind him, and it too showed the stars. The gaps on the floor could not be seen, and a panorama view of the starry space surrounded the two of them.

No, not two. There was a source of the voice in the darkness, and with focused intent, banagher stared at the starry space with a high detailed definition. Banagher convinced himself that it was simply a ridiculously oversized all-view monitor, easing himself from panic, but there was a black shadow appearing in his eyes. Center of what was probably a spherical cryo was the shape of a bed, illuminated by the surrounding stars, a lone shadow there. Banagher could tell there was a person on it.

On the slightly tilted bed was an old man with his hands outside the blanket, looking back at them. Banagher was instantly reminded of Cardeas Vist's eyes, his still body quaking.

Banagher could not voice out, not because he was overly shocked, but that the moment he saw the eyes, the searing emotions in his chest exploded, the scattering shrapnel stuffing his throat. He clenched his

fights, looking back at the eyes similar to his own reflection. Standing next to him, Audrey eked out a hoarse voice, “So you are the leader, Syam Vist…am I correct?” The old man remained on the bed, still motionless as he turned his eyes towards Audrey. The head brace functioning as a vitals control glittered like the stars, his frail face making a smile or sorts. There was an irresistible impression within Banagher’s heart that told him, yes, he knew this man.

“The descendant who inherits our bloodline, and the Princess of Zeon…there are none more worthy to inherit the ‘Laplace Box’ than you.”

An earnest smile appeared on his lips, the dark brown eyes giving a look of geniality and kindredness. That forlorn smile stabbed deeply into Banagher’s heart, but he did not look away from the face of Syam Vist. The eyes lost no sharpness despite the smile, shining a sharp glint back at him. There was no trace of intimidation, merely a silent stare faltering unwittingly, shone a lonely glint after a passage of years.

Part 5[edit]

The residential block had once ceased to revolve, and it slowly began to revolve. It did not stop at any point, but continued at how it usually did, gradually accelerating, giving the impression that it was completely over.

The impact belt surrounding the cylinder began to move in the opposite direction, accelerating its relative velocity, and everything appeared to be returning back to normal. Riddhe exhaled, and looked forward from the massive dryer-looking residential block of the “Magallanica”. Whatever happened could only be left up to imagination, but the anomaly that happened surely had something to do with the “Box”. So Banagher had arrived, so he vaguely convinced himself. His eyes had nowhere to go as they drifted in the empty voice, and the “Banshee” drifted towards “Industrial 7” lifelessly, acting as part of the space debris.

The closer he got towards the space colony, the thicker the space debris. If he kept drifting he might end up leaving the meteor cluster he was hiding in. Riddhe was in no mood to fear the opening of the “Box”, and he did not know what he should do thereafter. The reason for his presence, for his arrival, had become ambiguous. He callously looked over at the “Industrial 7” the size of his arm, and perhaps it was due to him being on the other side that he could not see the healed scars on the outer wall a month after it was damaged in the battle. The white silhouette of the “Magallanica *caused Riddhe’s numb heart to ache again.*

I heard your voice too. Everyone's waiting for you. Come back, Ensign Riddhe—Mihiro's voice kept calling for him, but he could not hear it. Everyone was too distracted due to the anomaly of the "Magallanica" , but Riddhe found himself to be lucky. How can I go back now? I could have shot at the bridge of the "Nahel Argama" if not for her…Marida Cruz. I could have killed everyone on the ship, including Mihiro. How can I possibly go back now? To whom do I beg for forgiveness? Looking away from the ship that caused his eyes to sear, Riddhe pulled the joystick, and let the drifting "Banshee" turn around, wanting to leave the scene before they called for him, only to see another unit beyond the countless debris.

It was a Base Jabber, their identification tags indicating they belonged to the "General Revil", but was not the one ferrying the "Banshee". Riddhe expanded the visual, saw the many crates it ferried, and gasped upon instant realization. Feeling much pain in his heart again, he tried to flee the scene, "Is that you, Riddhe?" but a familiar man's voice rang through the wireless.

Riddhe could not move upon hearing this voice; he had no answer for "Alberto……"Riddhe groaned, looking at the seemingly floating Base Jabber.

He had no idea why Alberto would enter the battlefield while ferrying a spare psycoframe, but Riddhe did sense that he ignored his own family problems, his grudge against Banagher, and had the utmost desire to seek a certain person. The passing thoughts linked together, the countless 'voices' of yearning, loss and pain echoed distantly, causing ripples in Riddhe's heart again. The latter looked away from the flat looking Base Jabber. The pain, the guilt he could not shift, they were all what he deserved, for he did something that could not be taken back …

"Sorry, I…she—"

"Don't mention it."

Riddhe's eyelids twitched once he was interrupted by the terse voice, *"This isn't what I'm talking about."* the heavy voice rang through the wireless.

"It doesn't matter now…"

A heavy silence beckoned. The guilt grew in his heart, the blame he could not shift as he clamped up, having no right to say anything. The two units had no intention to approach, and no intention to separate as they simply drifted in the void. Time merely passed on, allowing them

to recognize the importance of their losses. The surrounding debris seemed still, “Industrial 7” and the “Magallanica” merely flickering as they continued to move endlessly.

“…I investigated the movements of the “Magallanica”.

After a while, Alberto muttered, and Riddhe lifted his lowered head.

“The strange movement is to allow the residential block and the impact belt to resonate and interact at a certain point., opening the path from the residential block into the impact belt. It’s like the leader’s cryo is inside there.”

Riddhe’s mind was not fully sober, but he too felt it was the most plausible explanation. He stared at the revolving residential block with multiple layers of the snail-like “Magallanica”, “And that’s not all.” So Alberto continued.

“‘I can see the outer layer of the impact belt moving, so it’s probably three layers. This part is usually fixed to the outer shell, and it looks like it covers the gaps of the revolving block—”

“The space where the “Laplace Box” is hidden…?”

Riddhe answered. The residential block, impact belt, and the secret layer on the outermost sidelined together, creating a massive passcode. After a terse silence, “So the seal has been undone.” Alberto’s heavy voice sounded so pessimistic.

“Everything will come to an end…can you tell me now?”

There was no pretense, no spite. Riddhe’s eyes looked towards the relatively tilted Base Jabber.

“Before the contents of the “Box”…the true identity of the curse that binds us vanishes.”

Vanishes. This saying was not simply a metaphor, but Riddhe was in no mood to question further, the word ‘curse’ instead resonated in his empty heart. Whatever, since the seal of the “Box” had been undone, since everything will be cleared up, Alberto too had the right to know earlier. He too was bogged down by the gravity of his family, by that overly serious personality of his, leaving him with nowhere to escape. Even the one wish he wanted to fulfill could no longer be done. Alberto was a man who, the more he sought, the more he lost. Riddhe too felt much empathy as he looked at the “Magallanica” that was covered in rocks. Countless beacon lights flickered like fireflies, along with the connector at the wheel, and other items. There was an intense white light brighter than the beacons, a needle-like flash—

“Light signal…?”

It was a flash probing on its own, ignoring the various beacon lights. A different angle caused it to be blocked by the “Magallanica”. Riddhe tried to pursue it in his “Banshee”, only for a shrill siren to echo in the cockpit, and in his shock, he looked towards where it indicated.

There were two lights moving at high speeds, passing through the debris and approaching “Industrial 7”. Riddhe saw the lights instantly enter the connector, and after a brief silence, explosions of light occurred.

The fireballs expanded wordlessly, illuminating the “Magallanica” silhouette along with the space colony shrouded by the ‘wheel’. It was too far for the impact to be felt, but the light remained bright, and the visor could not filter it completely, vaporizing the shrapnel caused by the explosion pressure , and illuminating the floating debris and Base Jabber.

“Missiles…!?”

There was no other possibility. Someone fired at the “Magallanica” , the long range missiles hitting the colony connector. Riddhe had the “Banshee” raise its beam rifle, seeking the enemy towards where the missiles came from “What? What came flying!?” Alberto yelled flustered, and several beams shot through the void. The mega particles flew in from the same direction as the missiles, becoming thinner due to the long distance, yet still causing another explosion on the “Magallanica” and the space colony.

Part 6[edit]

The multi-sided monitors positioned before them caught sight of a strong flash upon “Industrial 7”. The massive light showed it was a direct hit, and once it vanished, the noise that occurred thickened the particle density, the long range visual erratic as a result.

“A direct hit! Targeting error range is 0.1. ”

The radar operator’s report echoed throughout the battle bridge of the “Rewloola”, which was located right beneath the normal bridge, the ceiling only tall enough for a person to not bend over, and there was no empty space beyond the seven sections and the panels. Hill Dawson stared at the wide-viewed monitor specifically for captain usage, “What’s the signal from the Captain?” the comms operator reported “Code 10S, active. Continue attack.” Hill had the urge to remove the helmet from his spacesuit, and slam it onto the floor.

It was a terrible feeling. No spacenoids could remain calm at the prospect of firing missiles or beams at a colony. It was an iron-clad rule that even in battle, they would not attack enemies whose backs were facing the colony, and nobody would dare to think of using the colonies as shields unless they were at tremendous disadvantage. The silver cylinder contained millions, even tens of millions of lives, and bombarding it would add new guilt to the old Republic military.

But several minutes ago, they detected a light signal, one fired from a corner of “Industrial 7” before it entered firing range, indicating that they were to attack the colony. Using the base position of the L1 Lagrange, the space colony’s absolute coordinates were calculated. The signal was a decoy, and the long ranged missiles were fired upon the connector between the colony and the builder. There were lots of debris in the trajectory, and it felt like a needle shooting through a hole, but once the trajectory was aligned, it was much easier to make a second shot. No matter the reason for this forbidden act, the important thing to Hill was that it was an instruction given by Full Frontal. The light signal was clearly from Frontal, the instruction given once he detected the “Rewloola”.

It had been half a day since the original rendezvous destination at L1 Lagrange was devastated and they proceeded to the shoal space region. During this time, this flagship of the ”Sleeves” had clashed with the “Mock Trojan Horse”, and were almost completely annihilated. Most of their fleet had been ravaged, and this “Rewloola”, along with two other Musaka-class, were the only ones battle ready. They had lost contact with Angelo and the rest of Frontal’s guards, and if they had no chance to regroup, they would lose the crux of their fighting strength, the backbone.

In a mere half day, the situation had changed completely. After the changes over the previous night, they lost contact with Monaghan Bakharov of the Zeon Republic, and at this point, Neo Zeon was losing its guise as a military organization. There was no one leading them, no directive given. However, as long as Frontal remained alive, the Red Comet, the Second Coming of Char, they had a chance to see the light of day again. Hill lifted his head from the monitor, “What’s the “Mock Trojan Horse” response?” asking the radar operator, Unable to detect. It’s hiding behind the colony builder, not moving. ” Hill then stared at the CGI corrected visual.

“So the Captain’s aiming for the “Laplace Box”…”

“The “Mock Trojan Horse” has predicted where we’ll be attacking from, and is hidden in a blind spot. Since they were not moving, it appeared

Frontal had a different objective in ordering the bombardment. The colony builder contained the “Laplace Box”, which meant the game was not over yet. Hill had no doubt, “Main cannons 1 and 2, fire at the same target.” He ordered, putting on the helmet .

“We’re out of range, but we should be able to hit the outer wall of the colony. Make sure we don’t hit “Industrial 7”. Just aim for the connector linking the colony and the builder.”

Voiced repeated his command, echoing in the cramped battle fridge, and the second wave of rounds were primed. His crew functioned as his limbs, able to quickly react, giving power to his commands. Neo Zeon itself had a military hierarchy, and if the organization crumbled for a third time, orderliness and command would be gobbled up by chaos. When the crew lacked hierarchy and a chain of command, they would be overwhelmed by the desire to live, and fall into the chaos thereafter. Hill quietly yelled to himself that he would never see this again. “Correcting error.” “Ready to fire.” Once these voices were called out, he exerted strength into his lower abdomen that was filled with anxiety and fury.

“Fire!”

The main cannons loaded on the flanks of the bright red ship, firing two consecutive charged beams from their cannons. At that moment, the light ignited in the form of mega particles at maximum range, and the four beams were fired from the”Rewloola”, flying at sub-light speed through the gap between the debris, stabbing into “Industrial 7” a sub-second later. An explosion appeared on the long ranged visual, noise appearing on the monitor that was not CG corrected in time.

Part 7[edit]

The expanding explosion illuminated the revolving residential block of the “Magallanica”, showing countless charred shrapnel. The shockwaves then knocked down the round scout units, causing the main monitor visuals to be filled with noise.

“Confirming direction! It’s from where the”Rewloola” is attacking!”

The operator quickly tapped at the panel, readjusting the position of the ball-shaped camera connected by steel wires to the bridge of the “Nahel Argama”, which had hidden behind the “Magallanica” to avoid the ”Rewloola” offenses. The remote ball camera was the only way they could eliminate the blind spot. Before visuals were regained, “How close are they?” Otto yelled, “About 10,000! Location and speed unchanged!” The operator answered with a volume rivalling Otto, and

the ship shook slightly due to the shock waves.

“It’s completely beyond firing range. They’re attacking from far range after affirming the absolute coordinates…are they trying to shoot down the colony and lure us out?”

The dispersal weakened the power, but it was still a beam weapon. The connector between the “Magallanica” and “Industrial 7” took direct hits from the missiles and the cannons, showing the biggest possible crack spanning hundreds of meters, embittering blueish-white sparks. Right at this moment…Otto gritted his teeth as he looked towards Liam standing next to him. His deputy could not answer to his guess as she looked back, “Are we sending out the MS squads?”

“How many units can we mobilize?”

“Romeo 010 can be deployed immediately. Golf 001 can be deployed in 5 minutes. ”

In other words, they could only deploy a weary “ReZEL” and a “Geara Zulu”. Such firepower was insufficient against a “Rewloola” leading two Musaka-class. Otto resisted the urge to click his tongue as he muttered, “Shall we pull the “Unicorn” back…?” The revolving residential block stopped eerily, and the “Magallanica *maintained a terrifying calm. The seal to the “Box” might have been undone, and nobody could guarantee that the next strike would not pierce the revolving residential block. Liam’s eyes were lamenting that they could only rely on the “Unicorn” at this point, but immediately agreed wordlessly at the next moment. She was about to brief the dispatch team, but Zimmerman’s gruff voice interjected, “No, it’s just a direction.”*

“It’s not normal for them to just attack a colony carelessly…to be forced to do such a thing. My guess is that they’re trying to get their ally in, or to get us to leave the colony, one of the reasons. ”

Zimmerman’s definitive voice had Otto shivering. There’s an enemy blasting a hole through the “Magallanica” and trying to invade it—“Is that…”Liam groaned, “There’s no confirmation he’s downed.” Zimmerman continued, his voice suppressing his anxiety.

“Tell ECOAS to watch out! If that’s the case, he’s already—”

“We received an emergency notification from friendlies!”

A sudden yell had Zimmerman silenced from shock. “Friendlies?” Liam barked, and Otto looked back at the communicator operator seat. Mihiro was nervously holding the headset with the communicator

connected,

“They call themselves the Tri-Stars of Londo Bell, now pursuing an enemy unit suspected to be the Red Comet. They’re requesting to speak to the commander.”

Mihiro repeated monotonously, her wavering eyes looking towards Otto. “A group of Tri-Stars? Why are they here…?” Liam muttered, and the radar operator reported. “Two high heat sources approaching. One of them is a new Federation unit in the “Unicorn” database. Otto did not hear it completely, merely thinking of the term ‘Red Comet’; he exchanged looks with Zimmerman, and barked at Mihiro with a changed tone,

“Get the comms back online!”

Part 8[edit]

‘…Yes. We have no intention to attack your ship now. We’re working together with the “Unicorn”!’

An incensed Daryl yapped away at the wireless, and Nigel was in no mood to hear what the captain of the”Nahel Argama” answered, his eyes focused on the outer walls of “Industrial 7. The shrapnel caused by the bombardment drifted by, and nothing else moving. There was nothing detected on the radar, merely the allied “Jesta” flying net to him being marked..

There’s no way he disappeared. Nigel clearly saw a red machine hiding amongst the debris, approaching “Industrial 7”. They were shaken off his tail, and within five minutes, a ship cannon’s beam attacked the place the red machine disappeared at, the connector linking to the colony builder, so they had to be related. Nigel had a vague idea of why the connector was attacked

“We are stationed at a similar point as the “Banshee”, but we’re acting independently. This isn’t a view our squad agree with, just a platoon…

Daryl’s explanation was increasingly erratic, but it was to be expected, for the positions both sides had was complicated beyond words. “I’ll leave the explanation to you, Daryl>” Nigel said, and piloted his “Jesta”, taking caution to evade the bombardment on the outer wall as he closed in on the colony builder.

Once he passed the outer wall of the ‘wheel’ that was different in color, he moved along the slightly round tip, and saw the connector covering the entire docking bay. The structure should be more appropriately called the sky corridor, a round pillar exceeding a 1km diameter that

connected the colony and the builder, often still and not revolving on its own. Its walls showed fresh scorch marks from the beam, the massive cracks rendering bluish-white gases visible. It wasn't scorched red, but the melted, distorted hole had yet to cool, the surrounding shrapnel floating around scorched by the after-heat, the heat sensor showing countless reactions, like lights dancing about.

The red machine, the "Sinanju", had completely disappeared. Nigel clicked his tongue as he peered at the crack large enough for a mobile suit to pass through

"Are we too late…?"

Is the ambush in the colony? Or the builder? If Nigel was to be wary of ambush, he could only give up on giving pursuit. He, left with no choice, looked up at the revolving residential block of the colony builder. The residential block was reminiscent of a snail shell when looked from afar, and the hole in the shell exposed the revolving layer, forming a massive wall before the"Jesta".

Part 9[edit]

The crawlers located on the inner sides of the calves slid, the belts covering 4 wheels spun with a rumbling sound. The wheels beneath the feet too spun, lots of dust sputtering by the feet of the "Loto". The tank form belts were used as roller skates, and the waist was lowered in humanoid form, rolling on the ground. The dust flew high due to low gravity, and the "Loto" with the numbers 729 on the shoulder slid into the elevator, sparks flying on the floor as the frame slammed the brakes

"We'll begin patrol near the connector. 729 will be stationed near the elevator. There appears to be one enemy approaching, but don't let your guard down. It's hard to communicate once the cryo opens."

The spiral hatch closed, and until the elevator began to ascend, they could hear Conroy's voice through the wireless, but the noise was cluttered. After the cryo was opened, there was a jamming of the comms akin to the release of Minovsky particles "Magallanica" all over the place. "Roger that. On alert around the elevator." The leader responded, and Gael, whose back was turned on him, looked towards the personal monitor of the co-driver. The sensors and other apparatus were affected by the electromagnetic waves, almost all failing. Perhaps there was a system preventing any eavesdropping protecting the cryo while the "Box" seal was undone.

What concerned Gael most was the "Unicorn" that was unmanned,

parked before the Vist residence. Its mission as the key to the “Box” was over, yet it was an indispensable armor that could continue to protect Banagher Links. Shall we leave the scouting to Conroy and the others in the 920 and stay inside the residence instead? While Gael was thinking, the "Loto” scaled the elevator exceeding 500 meters, leapt off the floor, and floated towards the zero gravity block. Gael tapped at the keyboard on the monitor, logging into the “Magallanica” security system.

The crew carrier hatch in the back opened, and the 8 ECOAS members quickly scattered with land movers on their backs. There were eight cargo elevators linking from the equivalent of the revolving residential block core. There were at least double the elevators for human use, however. These elevators were situated within the inner walls of the revolving residential bloc, and it was impossible to supervise all the positions given the massive circular path, let alone the countless elevators there might be. Gael continued to tap at the keyboard, not listening to the reports of the crew. The leader, upon seeing Gael fighting hard, asked with an anxious voice, “Can’t we just cut off the power to the elevator”

“I’m trying, but it’s difficult. It seems all controls are delegated to the cryo. Even my password’s rejected.”

The word ‘rejected’ appeared and disappeared over and over again, the security system showed no signs of opening. If they could intercept the surveillance footage within the facility, they could at least do something. The leader’s eyes continued to stare at the periscope, “Now that the secret of the century’s going to be opened, this is going to be expected.” This undaunted voice had Gael stop typing for a moment, and look over. The leader had lost his commander during the battle of “Palau”, and based on hierarchy, he took command of ECOAS 729. His age and rank were no higher than Conroy, but he had the dignity to lead a platoon. Neither had given their names, but Gael found comfort in knowing he could entrust his life to the man, especially in this clueless situation.

As it was a loop, the path to the elevator block was like an endless uphill, and their eyes were already used to the brightness of the gravity block, the pathway looking relatively dim. One third of the lights were extinguished as power was being conserved, resulting half the ceiling exceeding 100m in height being shrouded in darkness, the outer wall of the shaft unable to be seen. Vision on the infrared camera was poor, and they could only rely on their naked eye, the “Loto” flickering its flashlights on the right shoulder, slowly drifting down the corridor as it looked around. The trio inside the machine watched with bated breath

when the leader suddenly spoke up, “Which force were you from?” Gael gave a wry smile upon hearing that definitive voice. Ever since they regrouped on the “Nahel Argama”, Gael had never mentioned his personal information, but it appeared the habits he was ingrained with would show themselves in his actions.

“I did a lot of things during the war. After the war, I was at the intelligence branch for 3 years or so.”

“Of course…” The leader answered, giving a wry smile. This ECOAS member, a self-admitted worker of the Federation’s dirty deeds, might have imagined the intelligence branch had some unspeakable work. “Not used to life after the war?” He continued to chat, “I don’t have the willpower.” Gael too answered in a leisurely tone.

“So I once decided not to follow my Masters…but things don’t always go as planned.”

“Well, I get that. Those rotten ones who betray everyone can’t do this job. We’re dogs, but top dogs.”

The driver said, half-joking, and Gael smirked, wrinkles forming on his face, only for a cold air to suddenly descend above him, passing through the spacesuit, his hairs standing.

No, it was not the air. It was a sneering presence hidden somewhere in the darkness, looking down upon them. It was mocking them for merely being dogs, dispelling the cordial mood as it instantly engulfed the “Loto”. Before they could wonder if they were overimagining “What…?” the leader muttered, his eyes looking from from the periscope, while the driver next to him turned the main camera up, shining upon the ceiling, the strange-shaped object hidden in the cavity of the wall deeply engraved into Gael’s eyes.

For a moment, Gael assumed it was a statue warding against demons. It was a giant as serene as a god, yet strangely deformed. The monoeye flickered on its scorched face, leering away, reminding Gael of the source of that cold presence. There was a masked man with lush blond hair, and Gael froze upon realizing they might not be able to escape. The next moment, the strangely shaped giant, now with the loss of an arm, flickered its burners, blending into the darkness like an illusion.

“The Red Comet…!”

The leader yelled, and the driver tried to evade, but it was too late, even for Gael who tried to report into the wireless. The “Sinanju” quickly escaped the range of the flashlight, and drew its beam saber.

The light particles buzzed as it flashed, momentarily showing the red armor with melted marks all over it. Following that, Gael's senses were engulfed in the intense light and explosion.

The "Sinanju" beam saber swung horizontally, lopping off the "Loto" above its chest. The generator did not explode, but in an instant, it lost its head and hands, the legs and scorched severed surface of the body left behind. Gael ducked in time, and did not die immediately, but he saw the burned lower bodies of the driver and leader upon the charred seats. Everything was blown away by the rushing heat wave, countless shrapnel blending into the darkness. The "Sinanju" raised the beam saber, its massive frame in his eyes.

Half its face mask was severed, the monoeye range and cables exposed, resembling an eyeball rumbling madly. The scorched armor swayed like a tumor, and the humanoid machine devoid of its left arm struck from above. Gael lost his lost vestiges of consciousness, his body engulfed by the beam saber before his eyes, thrown into the seat of the scorching light.

Part 10[edit]

A shockwave occurred far away, the cryo filled with stars shaking on its floor. It was much weaker than when the "Magallanica" was shaking, but Banagher instinctively realized it was closing in.

"More pursuers…"

Syam seemed to sense the slight tension, and spoke up. He looked up at the unwavering starry space, the eyes made it difficult to determine if he was similarly a human, his speaking voice seemingly amassed with 'time'. Banagher continued to listen as he watched the former's shrivelled body reclined in the bed. This man knows, so his heart of stone muttered. Syam knew of what was happening, what had happened, and what might happen in the future.

"You saw it?"

Banagher took a step forward, saying subconsciously. So Syam looked over, and Audrey seemed tensed up.

"Have you seen everything…that happened to us, all from here?"

The heat suppressed in his chest oozed from his mouth in a hiss. If this was truly the case, the man was no different from Full Frontal, secretly hiding in this underground bunker, watching sacrifice after sacrifice occur, waiting like a god awaiting the winner after all the elimination.

Syam's head, buried in the pillow twitched, and he did not answer immediately, instead looking towards the ceiling. His slightly wavering eyes were covered by his eyelids, and he opened them again, staring into the illusion of stars. "Yes, I did." The response flew like a wind, the heat in Banagher's heart throbbing wildly.

"Not everything though, just what I can know from here…"

There was no arrogance, no reproach. It was the voice, the expression of a man who had to endure everything. Banagher sensed the throbbing heat in his heart suffocating him, and was about to take a step forward, only to stop as his arm was grabbed from behind.

Audrey did not let go of his arm, and instead, she took a step forward, looking towards Syam. "It was an intense war." She eked out a repressed voice.

"We sacrificed the people who were bewitched by the "Laplace Box", and many other innocents. Who we are, what bloodlines we inherit, these do not matter. I hope you understand that we stand here representing the casualties of this war."

The warmth flowing from the palm was telling Banagher to calm down, and he took a deep breath, relaxing his fists. Syam's eyes squinted to the point of nothingness. "I have heard your words." His heavy voice echoed through the cryo.

"But despite that, I have to express my thanks. It is because of someone like you that he is able to make it here safely."

Saying that, he gave Banagher a familial look, only to erase his emotions immediately. "I shall tell you everything then." So he said, a cruel glint appearing in his eyes. Once again, Banagher clenched his relaxed hands.

"You shall have to choose the price however. To open the "Box", or to keep it sealed, or to destroy it without care for the consequences. You may also leave without asking."

The probing eyes were looking at Banagher, who exerted strength into his practically trembling legs, looking back.

"The decision lies in your hand. You understand?"

After exerting strength for the last time, Audrey's hand finally let go of Banagher, who took a step forward, nodding towards the expression reminiscent of Cardeas. Syam's eyes flickered as he reached his hand beyond the bed. A cylindrical panel silently rose from the floor, and the hand that was seemingly weathered over a century was placed on it,

like there was a side table fixed to the table.

Banagher sensed a tremor rising up from the floor, potentially causing him to shiver. The floor right before the bed stopped projecting space, and there was a 3 meters wide quadrilateral hole, rising next to the space hologram. Banagher and Audrey stepped back in unison, staring at the object rising from the abyss. The faint light from the star cluster shone upon its glossy surface, though not particularly distinct, as it gradually showed itself. It was a hexagonal block placed on a pedestal. Banagher had an impression of it. Perhaps it was similar to something he had seen before?

With a tremendous throbbing in his heart, Banagher looked towards the object that rose from the floor. The hexagon approximately 1 meter in length had countless words on it, resembling a honeycomb. The object giving off a silver glint was—

“The stone tablet, of the Universal Century charter…?”

Audrey eked a hoarse voice. “It used to be called the Laplace Charter.” Syam answered, and Banagher went towards the stone tablet with quite a few damages.

On the day the Universal Century started, it was the foundation of the Federation government as they declared the change of calendar. Representatives of various countries, led by the Premier, engraved their own signatures on the hexagonal Charter with many chapters. Banagher saw the same thing in the Central Senate Hall at Dakar. Loni Garvey said it was a replica, and the original stone tablet was destroyed during the “Laplace Incident”.

So, in other words, this was the original? But so what? Banagher could not understand at all. This thing, this, was the “Laplace Box”—? His thoughts froze momentarily, and was about to turn into rage, “Banagher, look!”Audrey’s tense voice entered his ears.

“It is different from what we know. There is an additional chapter.”

Audrey pointed at the Charter, her finger shaking. Banagher himself learned of it in school, but he was never the model student to memorize it all. “Beneath article 14, chapter 7.” So with Audrey prompting, Banagher looked towards the engraved text ‘Chapter 7 Future’. The words were engraved into his eyes as he focused his will on understanding it.

Chapter 7. Future.

The Earth Federation needs lots of hopes and expectations, and have prepared the following articles for Humanity's future.

Article 15.

1, The Earth Federation shall broaden research and preparation to defend any biological emergencies beyond the Earth celestial sphere.

2. In future, if the existence of new space-adapting humans is confirmed, their inclusion in the running of the government is to be prioritized.

"If the existence of new space-adapting humans is confirmed, their inclusion in the running of the government is to be prioritized…"

Audrey's monotonous voice as she recited the message exploded in Banagher's mind, his heart jolting. While she was mesmerized and not leaving the tablet at all, Banagher turned his back on her as he stared at Syam unflinchingly. It happened all because of this, this one thing… Banagher could not stop his thoughts from running wild, and Syam took on that confusion as his eyes flicked silently, the face sunk into the pillow staring into the distant stars.

"This is the "Laplace Box" the truth to the curse binding us over a hundred years."

The sigh that encapsulated a hundred eyes shook the air in the cryo, piercing through the body and heart. It seemed the object called time was speaking as Banagher's eyes returned to the stone tablet floating in the void.

"At the same time…it was a prayer."

Syam continued. These words overlapped with the voice of the ghost Banagher heard at "Laplace", and unwittingly approached the tablet, reaching his hands towards the relatively scarred hexagon. The polished stone reflected himself wearing the white pilot suit, the reflected silhouette becoming an unknown youth who similarly reached his hand towards this stone tablet a hundred years ago, and their hands touched across time—

Part 11[edit]

"That's…it…?"

The voice eked out was unwittingly hoarse, shaking. Alberto subconsciously moved his head, checking the pilot seat of the dim Base Jabber, and his wavering eyes looked towards the window

before him. The lieutenant driving never returned from the engine room, and right beyond the window was the face of the “Banshee” that was up close. The “Magallanica” half hidden behind it was no longer bombarded into oblivion, the strange snail shell-like appearance quietly floating in space.

Yes, nothing would change. Even with the erased article from original tablet, he found the world would not really change. Is that truly the secret capable of overturning the Federation government? All the plotting and enduring, the countless sacrifices that could not be recovered, all those for this thing? Alberto showed neither rage nor anguish, nor was he truly flustered; his mind was simply blank. His eyes returned to the “Banshee” informing him of the truth, and the back mask was staring into a spot in space. *“It’s not the biggest reason.”* Riddhe’s heavy voice echoed once again.

“But Ricardo Marcenas did use the sealed space called “Laplace” to insert this article, the “Laplace” that formed the prime minister’s residence drifting in space, the land where the Universal Century began…the tablet with the Charter was supposed to have the signatures of each country’s representative. They planned for it to be held in “Laplace”, hoping that no dissident forces would have the change to interfere. The government had universally felt that even if there was a possibility, they should not promise the spacenoid too much power. Yet Ricardo, who added this article despite it all, could be said to be a true idealist. His personality, and the truth of this Universal Century…was simply a disguise to the brazen truth of an abandonment policy—”

“But he became an obstacle, to the people who felt there was no need for additional humans to join the government.”

Alberto continued without realizing, clasping together the fingers as his blood stilled. They started with the space migration plan to ensure the longevity of Earth, heavily burned by global warming and population explosion. It was fated for the Federation to exert merciless arrogance, to alleviate the impacts on every country, every person. The largest authoritative organization in human history required Ricardo Marcenas as an ideal face…as his heart chilled increasingly, looked towards the “Banshee”. The golden horns dropped slightly, *“Yes.”* And Alberto had an impression that the “Banshee” was the one talking.

“But it was really as they wished. I think the conservatives never truly viewed thought that the people adapting to space would be deemed a danger. Too many people feel that the liberal advocate Ricardo was being too obstructive, and the tablet presented an opportunity to strike.

So they decided to begin the assassination, disguising it as a terrorist attack done by separatists. That was the grand place to destroy "Laplace" at the change of the calendar, along with the representatives allied to Ricardo. At the same time, it was the perfect plan to quell the rising call for terrorism, eliminate the separatists, and strengthen the Federation's authority. So to execute this plan, they hired some terrorists that were to be disposed of. Syam Vist…your great grandfather, was one of them, and the representative acting as main conspirator was George Marcenas. The man commonly known as Marcenas Junior, the third prime minister, Ricardo Marcenas's son."

George Marcenas took over the will of his assassinated father, and after taking over as acting deputy prime minister, he became the prime minister. His call of "Never forget Laplace" involved hardline stances against terrorism for another 20 years until 'all conflicts on Earth was annihilated'. The Federation government inherited the vices of an overly massive organization, cronyism distinct from society rampant, but there was quick, if not overwhelming brutality against the dissidents. The Federation maintained this nature all because George's administration had cultured this. Because of the assassination, Junior and the others had the expected outcome of the Federation maintaining Emergency Relief Authority.

Alberto was speechless. Filicide, patricide—it all continued as gears of cause and effect, but to think it all started from then. He realized he was part of this cause and effect, and understood how Riddhe, who called this a real 'curse', was brooding over it. Once again, he looked towards the "Banshee" speechlessly, and saw the bitter look on the sidelong face. *"The plan worked, except for a minor miscalculation"* His voice seemingly vanished into the darkness as he continued.

"Nobody knew how Syam Vist survived…and how he obtained the Laplace tablet. It was over ten years since the incident when Syam first contacted the government, and the original tablet he had consisted of the article the current one doesn't have. It's just a prayer to be entrusted to the future, but it concerned the future of the spacenoid, and one could imagine that the manner to deliberately eliminate and assassinate was all a government conspiracy…you can now imagine how the conspirators panicked. They probably had at least a hundred plans to assassinate Syam, but Syam was a smart man. Even though he would blackmail the government, he would not demand too much. Instead, he would ask for a little convenience compared to the main problem at hand, to invest in a certain startup back then called Anaheim Electronics. He would not appear on the surface, but remain as a back of that company, the Vist Foundation that was established,

and dabble in the essentials industry—"

"That started a coexistence relationship with the Federation, a system maintained by hiding the original tablet…the "Laplace Box". It didn't matter what it was. The "Box" became the symbol of world order …"

The ex-terrorist scaled up the social ranks through the capital of the secret he somehow obtained, and the Federation government chose to coexist with him instead. Alberto and Riddhe were living in the results formed by this twisted history. All ambitions and plotting they had had vaporized, and they were simply ordinary people who wanted to protest the interests they already had—the currently existing world. Once he learned of the fact that it all started from his relative, Alberto let out a heavy sigh.

"At first, it was merely blackmail material on the government. Even if the truth was revealed, it would not topple the Federation government, and would not have any big effect on the space migration policies. The government did also have the option to recognize the original stone tablet and rerelease the clause. At least 20 years later however, when the Federation and the Vist Foundation had their coexistence relationship stabilized, problematic thought. His ideas soon spread over the Earth celestial sphere, changing the meaning of the "Box" completely."

The eked voice landed in Alberto's heart, causing his heart to jump. He widened his eyes, staring at the "Banshee" sidelong face while it looked afar.

This was the true meaning of the magic of the "Box". Riddhe had said, "When the One Year War happened…everything changed" "Syam, and the others who walked down the path he paved, realized the significance of what they did, and discovered the real 'power' of the "Laplace Box"." Looking over at where the "Banshee" was looking at, Alberto saw the moon flicking amongst the debris, and once he realized what Riddhe was getting at, he was shocked speechless.

They could not see from here, but there was no doubt it was the colony cluster behind the moon. A certain man brought his troublesome ideas and spread it across the Earth celestial sphere, on a certain Side 3—

"The Newtype theory Zeon Deikum advocated was that mankind can continue to evolve, and it was an attractive idea to the spacenoids who were abandoned citizens to begin with. That idea, along with the spacenoids movement to gain independence, brought about the whole new concept, and the "Box" became a real taboo. If the existence of new space-adapting humans is confirmed, their inclusion in the

running of the government is to be prioritized…what was supposed to be a prayer for the distant future became reality within half a century, and became a curse toppling the Federation government…"

Part 12[edit]

With the moon as the backdrop, an endless array of ships fired their cannons in unison. Tens, hundreds of ships fired beams through the space of eternal night, shooting into the opposing fleet, and rings of light of various sizes lit up like lights.

The counterattack trail of fire continued to fly through the fireballs appearing and vanishing, crossing the second wave of beam barrages as the mega particle cannons scorched space. The lights spreading above their heads were so dazzling, Banagher had the urge to cover his eyes, his still body faltering. A Zeon Principality Musai-class ship took a direct hit, and exploded, and a Federation ship got hit in the hull by missiles, engulfed in a fireball. A flare exploded from a Federation's ship engine, crashing into its allied units, and another side, a platoon of Zakus fired their handheld bazookas, the ammunition pulling its gaseous trails as they blew up the bridge of the ship, the other combatants caught in the shockwave being more of the Zaku's accomplishments.

There was no Federation mobile suit to be seen. Before the War, the Federation army knew that Zeon was developing these weapons called mobile suits, but they were said to have committed the cardinal sin of underestimating the enemy, resulting in their complete defeats during the preliminary stages of the One Year War. Banagher quietly noted to himself that this might have been a record of that era as he saw the battlefield projected in the cryo. The Federation ships were buried one after another, and they were headed towards an open space colony. The Musai-class ships seemed small like peanuts compared to the massive colony they surrounded, its massive cylinder appearing in the space battlefield, not fixated at its position. On its other end, there were nuclear pulse engines blaring, moving slowly along with the Musai-class ships. The three mirrors on the cylinder had been severed, the silver outer walls stained with countless scorch marks, but the cylinder 30km in length continued to accelerate.

It was headed towards the sphere with the blue atmosphere, Earth. It was getting close. Earth, entering the camera along with the colony, might not appear so big, but the powerful gravity was already at work, and it appeared the colony was pulled in by Earth. The attacks of the pursuing Federation fleet was useless, and the colony approaching with the Zeon fleet kept accelerating, finally entering the planet's

silhouette, becoming an arrow as it shot a long trail upon the atmosphere like a blackened stain.

“I remember when the colony fell.”

Syam noted quietly, his bed seemingly floating on Earth’s silhouette. Next to Banagher, Audrey seemingly tensed up, but he stared at Syam’s sidelong face.

“20 years passed since we heard of Zeon’s name. The nightmare we feared would happened finally happened on that day. But what I remembered clearly was neither fear nor anguish, but clear condescension. The feeling I felt when I first saw this…yes, I did see the imagery of the colony falling. Just as I did 100 years ago…the day “Laplace” was blown up.”

Earth’s reflective light showed Audrey’s astounded frowning face. The words ‘“Laplace” was blown up’ had Banagher reeling greatly, but he continued to look at Syam, who was covered by the backlight.

“I always thought it was an illusion. Even I had forgotten about the matter until I saw that scene become reality. But I did see the demon-like “Zaku” army along with the colony burned by the atmosphere. Back then, the term mobile suit did not exist…that was a scene of the future the ghosts of “Laplace” showed me. They wanted me to stop it, to use the “Laplace Box”—the true Universal Century Charter, to prevent this destructive development…”

The tip of the colony approaching Earth touched the atmosphere. Its body was scorched red and torn apart by friction, the peeling outer walls becoming an elongated tail as it sank into the atmosphere. The colony as it was could no longer be seen, the scorching tip causing it to resemble a massive arrow, covered by grey dust as it tore through the atmosphere, landing onto the earth. It formed an ugly scar upon the Earth, and became an unprecedented event of a colony crashing into the earth.

“I once had a chance to stop it. If I had opened the “Box” before the One Year War, if I had proven that the original Federation government…had a provision for space-adapting humans to join the Central government, there might have been a different future. The ‘supposed future’ sealed in the “Box”…was truly in my hands.”

The eyes were reflecting the tragedy before him, but Syam’s flickering eyes were looking at something else. At this moment, the ‘power’ to topple the Federation finally materialized in Banagher’s heart, and he looked towards the “Laplace Box”—the stone tablet with the original

Charter of the Universal Century.

Zeon Zum Deikun had advocated that space-adapting humans could evolve into Newtypes, and became the hope of the people who were abandoned in space. The Federation government only knew to suppress him, but the original Federation had hopes for space-adapting humans—Newtypes, and had wished for them to coexist with the government. Result-wise the Federation personally buried the existence of this ideal along with the "Laplace Incident" till this day. If the spacenoids who believed in Zeon knew of this Truth that could have changed their futures—

"But I forgot about the illusion that day, or I might say, deliberately chose to forget. The Vist Foundation was founded for the "Box" to be entrusted to the future, but it lost its objective without knowing, just becoming bigger and bigger…I, along with the organization that should be part of identity, lost 'my only desire'. We merely held onto the blood-stained present, and not reached our hands towards the future …"

Syam brought his withered hands before him, and behind him, the colony vanished beyond the horizon, a flash forming as it landed, bright like the morning sun as it scorched the Earth a burning color.

Audrey pursed her lips, turning her head aside in disgust. Banagher looked towards Syam's hands that were lit by the light. The palms that had killed his own son, crushed the 'promised future' had eased down, the fingertips left with an emptiness that could not grasp anything. The light of the colony calmed soon after the flash of the colony drop, leaving behind the darkness of the stars shrouding the sultry sidelong face of the old man.

Part 13[edit]

The body and heart filled with shock and trepidation sank in the cold darkness. The shockwaves grew distant, some aftershocks. There were no feelings involved in Alberto's heart, and no clear hatred, just anguish flowing with the waves lingering in his heart. Was his aunt, Martha Carbine, going to aim the colony laser at this area? So he wondered, but even then, this notion seemed so unrelated to him. He looked towards the space outside the window with his empty eyes "Can't be helped." a hoarse voice came from the stationary "Banshee".

"There is no scientific proof that the Newtypes exist, and it can be taken as fake if we look at it the other way. Most importantly, the Federation itself buried this clause, and this fact is the biggest weapon to those believing in Zeonism. If the spaceboids know of the "Box" existence and lead an insurgency under the name of Zeon…the population of 3.5 billion on Earth can only choose to remain silent, and protect the secret, all so that this world doesn't turn into Hell."

The idea of a Newtype brought hope to the spacenoids who were practicing abandoned citizens, but at the same time, it became the source of the symptoms. It brought a new period of class segregation,

and the finally united humanity became divided once again. It was because the “Laplace Box” existed that the Federation had been highly oppressive, partially out of fear, but it finally forced the Principality of Zeon to call for independence. Recognizing the existence of Newtypes and giving them priority to join the government was akin to letting the abandoned spacenoids occupy the palace, and they could not allow that.

“But Hell broke loose. The One Year War…we lost half our population, and the Federation managed to defeat the Principality of Zeon, but at a great cost. The War proved the existence of Newtypes, and the curse of the “Box” was heavier. Nobody knew what the content was, fear was the only thing ingrained in their hearts. Do not open the “Box”, The Federation government will be doomed if you do…father and the others could only continue to hide this secret. Not just to hide the skeleton in the closet, but also to protect the billions of people. Faced with the terror of another destructive war, humanity chose to live in this twisted establishment, down the path of being fed till they die.)

After the War, the remnants of Zeon were hunted down, and the Federation government began thorough politics centered upon Earth. They oppressed the spacenoids excessvies, creating the right wing extremists that were the Titans, dividing the Federation army into two again. The Federation army weakened, and Neo Zeon seized the opportunity to start two Neo Zeon wars. The Federation barely managed to win after much hardship, preserving its pride as the highest authority, but the disillusionment of the spacenoids had become widespread, and the after war society remained unstable.

While the anti-government forces had quietened down, Neo Zeon maintained their presence as the “Sleeves”, and one could see some factions in the Republic of Zeon backing them. It was a regimented dispute that was quelled under economic sanctions, but there was a tense feeling that a misstep could ignite the situation, and the nightmare of a full scale war remained. In such a situation, Riddhe’s father, his cronies, and the Vist Foundation secured the secret of the “Box” together, and planned a Federation military reassembly when the Republic was to be dissolved. The acts of the Settlement Issues Council were completely correct, if taking the perspective of protecting the Federation government. They would banish the myth of Newtypes, and execute the UC plan to eliminate Zeonism forever…Alberto himself felt they should not be blamed for trying to get back the Universal Century that should be.

The secret of the “Box” was so heavy. The tragedy of the One Year War resulted in the ghosts of half the population, bearing it down all

the more. Who dared say that if the assassination did not happen, that the original charter of the Universal Century was announced, the Newtypes would be accepted a blessed? Could they have progressed to a society centered around Newtypes if the One Year War and the future conflicts did not happen?

It was impossible. There would be a war in a different manner. It would not have been Federation vs Zeon, but Earthnoids vs Spacenoids—the people who abandoned and the abandoned people, a full scale bloody conflict. The Federation government would have fractured, and the first united government in human history would have crumbled within a hundred years.

But at the same time—one could not deny the possibility that if the "Box" was opened before Zeonism reigned, before the One Year War happened, the Principality of Zeon would not be the cause of much violence. If Zeon Deikum had known there was a clause to head over governance to the Newtypes, he might not have gone about spreading his ideas of the Newtypes, and the ruling Zabis might have acted differently Nevertheless, it was all just a possibility. Nobody could be sure of the 'future they should have', and their ancestors who were ordinary men and not Newtypes chose the most appropriate action, to eliminate this 'possibility'—or to seal it. How could they be reproached? It was for the sake of protecting the world. If he and his allies were in the same position, they too would have done the same, to maintain the status quo.

And then…they lost everything; not just the future, but also the hope and development of every future minute, every future second, becoming mere blocks of flesh who wept over the lost possibilities. They however were not the only ones; every person in the Earth celestial sphere had lost the compass leading them to the next day, a collective society that had failed to progress. They were simply focused on trying to fit in as one of the billions of people out there. "But what order are we protecting by doing this?" Riddhe's voice rang, and Alberto mistakenly took them as his own voice.

"I did something that can't be taken back. I heard her voice, Marida Cruz. We only brushed past each other, and I never talked to her before, I never knew of her name, but I heard her 'voice'. What's going on? People can understand each other, people have such a possibility. I said I would protect, but I never believed in the ones I wanted to protect. I disappointed everyone…I lost everything…"

The words got increasingly hotter and damp, reverberating in his body and mind that were drifting in the endless voice. Yes, they could not

believe, they could not entrust themselves into this act of trust, and merely feared that they, or the world, would change. Alberto looked away from the seemingly weeping “Banshee” with its head lowered, and towards the still silent “Magallanica”.

“Everything is made by Man, for Man…huh?”

Everyone, including Syam, Cardeas, and the Marcenas family, had the same distrust and despair, and chose the act they felt was best. They did not know how to trust others, and resulted in having to bear every result, stuck in the sturdy cage called reality. What did Syam and his father believe in when they chose to open the “Box” even if it meant being the enemies of the world? Just a redemption for the possibilities and futures they had sealed away? …Alberto hoped not. He hoped they wanted to open the “Box” because they believed in something he did not know of. Otherwise, that would be too tragic.

No matter how outstanding a person was, he was still merely a feeble human. Having finally understood the weight of loss and guilt, he could finally understand their troubles from their perspective. Cardeas Vist never got to express his true sentiments when he was murdered by his son. In the final moment of his life, he had the coincidence of meeting his other son, who was entrusted with the “Unicorn”. That might have been the only miracle Cardeas ever got to experience in his life. Even though they shared the same bloodline, as a fellow man, Alberto was grateful for this miracle. Surely his father would not have expressed the true sentiments, especially when they could not communicate with each other—

“Just one word…if you had said just one word…”

I would have devoted my all to you if that happened. Alberto berated his father for the last time, and then focused the rage on himself for being unable to confess to Marida. The lingering grudges slowly melted away as he stared at the “Magallanica” filled with Cardeas’ soul, and all he could not was to keep crying.

Part 14[edit]

The hand touched the cylindrical control panel, the space on the cryo walls vanished, beckoning a new visual. Some light flicked far above their hands, forming a dim world of black and blue that seemingly exerted heavy pressure. The deep blue color similar to Marida’s eyes appeared on the all view screen.

“The lifeforms borne from the seas moved upon land after thousands of billions of years…it will take countless rises and falls, thousands of

billions of years again for them to take the form of Man."

Guided by Syam's words, the cryo located at the bottom of the sea. From the deep blue world, they went to a world of blue and green. The fish scales were sparkling silver, gathering like clouds, clustering the monitor. Suddenly, everything dispersed, and opposite them was a sparkling water surface. The silver colored fish were filled with breathtaking life, and the sunlight kept shining upon the Earth for billions of years. Shaken by the light filled with ostensible life, Banagher blocked his eyes with his hands, and the cryo cut past the water surface, moving on the sea.

The bubbles bursting everywhere had light refracted upon them, causing a prism effect and creating a rainbow in the blue skies. The clouds were drifting amidst the thick atmosphere, and beneath it was a vast ocean, some traces of land visible across the horizon. The cryo cut past the skies, wading upon the sea, headed to a patch of land. A blue sky and sea filled with various hues dashed by in a blurr, and Banagher brought his shoulder close to Audrey's, fearful that he would be blown away.

"Such is Evolution. An individual's lifespan is insufficient in experiencing so. What Newtypes have is the ability to expand their cognition…prompting a change in individual awareness."

They surged past the seas, but showed no signs of stopping as the cryo continued to enter deep into land. The barren plains departed from their feet, and then there were hordes of animals gathering like ants. These caribous resembled deer as they covered the plains, silently moving forward as they moved towards warmer lands. Driven by instinct, it continued to move, and no river or rocky walls could stop them. They continued to march arduously to escape the fate of hunger, cold and illogical threats. Such unreasonable impulses could also be used to describe the actions of the flocks of birds escaping the cold.

Hundreds, thousands of birds flapped their wings together to pursue that Promised Land, and they formed a blanket covering the sky and the ground. They knew not to stop as they encircled the cryo, slowly departing in the back. Above where the birds left, Banagher saw an old propeller plane leaving a trail of clouds behind. Its shadow fell upon the treacherous cliffs, and it was the wings humans obtained through their own knowledge. There was no reason why humans could not do what birds could—humanity was driven by this impulse to create a product borne out of knowledge, and it could be said the most natural thing to do was for Man to defy nature.

"Using knowledge, we evolved for knowledge…as far as we know of,

Man is the only creature with knowledge and blood. Given that humans used its knowledge to distinguish itself from other lifeforms through the evolution of intellect and the creation of new systems, the prior examples would have been meaningless. The Evolution Theory we know of is a change caused by physical evolution. We have yet to see an example of the mind, a formless ‘power’, evolving. ”

The plan slowly glided by the ground, and a large passenger craft equipped with jet engines flew about it, and above that, there was a small trail of white smoke, probably a shuttle headed towards space. It was headed to an altitude even the birds could not reach, and the cryo pursued the shuttle, breaking free of gravity as it flew into the skies. The endless earth hastily drifted by, showing the shapes of the continents, soon before the stars began to sparkle in the blue skies that were becoming deep blue, a darkness similar to the deep blue sea filling Banagher’s eyes.

The lifeforms born in the deep darkness surged past the flooding of colors, and entered darkness again. So it ended…was it really the endpoint, after thousands of billions of years of evolution? Banagher looked around the eternal night that was space, and felt a poignant terror. At the same time, he heard a thud shaking through the space.

It was not the end, so the voice told him. The space of eternal night shall be the Promised Land for a new beginning. The voice resonated with his heartbeat, slowly filling the space. They were the end of their physical evolution, and then proceeded with the evolution of their intellect—they showed humanity’s power and kindness to the world through the possibilities within them. Zeon Deikum’s ideals, along with the new evolution his own father deemed as a responsibility, began to throb in the endless darkness. The billions of lives that had finished their first journey were gathering energy for the next phase of their journey, their rhythms reaching him. As he stood upon the cryo cutting through the void, Banagher looked towards the source—the silver eggs forming the cradles of evolution

There were five silver eggs between the Earth and the moon, five Lagrange Points blinking countless warning lights as they revolved on their own, millions, tens of millions of lives breathing within these cylinders. Humanity had created artificial land in space, and hundreds of colonies were giving off silver glow. Banagher heard them pulsating like eggs waiting to be hatched, the healthy throbbing sounds akin to the primordial lifeforms throbbing in the deep sea devoid of light.

“As the guardian of the “Box”, I have spent an overly long time for a physical body…and I have ‘one only word’.”

The quiet voice negated the throbbing, echoing through the cryo and pulling their drifting consciousness back upon their bodies. Banagher recovered as he blinked his eyes, and looked towards Syam on the bed.

“If there is truly the existence of a Newtype…and if, as the stone tablet says, there are new forms of humans adapted to space, I wish to entrust the “Box” to them. We old humans might not be able to do so, but they may be able to use the “Box” better, and obtain the ‘promised future’…all I am doing is to repeat the prayer a century ago. Perhaps the ghosts of “Laplace” possessing me are making me think so…if the human consciousness…if the technology to touch the human heart is completed, I do want to see for myself. ”

The rainbow lights throbbed hazily, gradually filling the cryo. The light of the psycoframe, the curtain of aurora looked comforting as they beckoned the heart. Banagher saw the resonating light takeshape, forming a psycofield as it orbited around the Earth. The little planet slowly pulling towards Earth due to gravity was the Neo Zeon space base "Axis”. The visual was clearer than what Aaron had shown, and “Axis” forming a massive meteor, was on a collision course with Earth, but a rainbow belt captured the black shadow, changing its course and extending towards the sun. Following that, a white giant giving off the same glow appeared on the all view screen.

The key to the “Box”, the “Unicorn Gundam”, used the psycoframe as its flesh and blood as it dragged a rainbow trail. There formed a rainbow flood in the eternal darkness…it appeared to be life borne from the darkness of the deep sea. Was it a light reflecting the resonating thoughts of humanity, the next light of the next world the primordial life saw? Beyond the rainbow as the road continued—

“After UC 0100, the Republic of Zeon shall be dissolved, and Zeon’s history shall end. The term Newtype shall be gone with the wind, and one day, the curse of the “Box” will be turned to nothingness.”

Syam continued. The departing “Unicorn Gundam” vanished together with the rainbow.

“So until then…before all is forgotten and swallowed in the abyss, we have to reveal the truth of the “Box” to the world, while the ‘prayer’ can be conveyed as a ‘prayer’ when the ‘curse’ remains a ‘curse’ …”

“But this will start another war.”

A firm, adamant voice had Syam tilt his head slightly, and Audrey did not look back at Banagher, who was staring at her, as she took a step

forth and stared at Syam.

“Since it has the signatures of various representatives, the clause written on the original stone tablet should be legally binding. It is the unique weapon that can defeat the Federation, for Neo Zeon, or Monaghan Bakharov of the Republic. If they are forced by the Federation to respond with force, it may be a repeat of the One Year War…a conflict encompassing all the spacenoids and the earthnoids. If that is the price for the ‘promised future’, that will be too—”

“This is why I want to entrust this to you, the Newtypes.”

The calm, yet resolute voice answered gently, rendering Audrey with no resolve to continue. Syam’s eyes remained the same as he looked back at her.

“You may choose not to “Box”, or destroy it. If you cannot accept so, you may destroy my old body and kill me off.”

The final words, along with the stare, were directed towards Banagher, who clenched his trembling fists, enduring the innate, sharp stare from Syam.

“But…I have a more somber prediction of the future when the “Box” is opened. A future where nothing is changed.”

He looked up to the clusters of stars in the skies, his sidelong face shrouded in shadow. “Nothing, will change…?” Audrey’s little mutter ended Banagher’s eyes softly.

“Words are simply words, and the law can be interpreted according to Man’s convenience. In the short term, there will be a huge uproar. There may be a turnover of political authority, some activists requesting for those clauses to be invoked. But, that is all. Are Newtypes simply those who have adapted to space? Do Newtypes really exist? There are countless experiments and counterpoints, and the dispute has ended without a firm resolution. A sharpened debate will lose to the words of the masses, and one day, it shall be ignored…”

It probably no, would surely end up this way. The unconditional belief froze Banagher’s body as he stared at Syam’s face. Audrey stumbled back, “Then…for why exactly…” She let out a hoarse voice. Without saying a word, Syam reached for the control panel by his bed.

The actual visual of space vanished, and the all view screen depicted the scene of a certain park. It was not Earth, nor was it the image within the colony. The skies at 60-70 meters tall at most were covered by the checkered light-capturing windows, the sunlight shining through the refractive mirrors from the outside. The ground was an endless, gentle gradient, and every direction appeared to be a slope. It was a donut-shaped space a ring smaller than the revolving residential block of the “Magallanica.”

Within a corner of this inner wall was the wall of a white building similar to a concert hall, with trimmed shrubs next to it. There was a massive podium at the roof of this hall, the background of the twenty meters wide Earth Federation flag as the background. The flag covered the light retaining windows, and on both ends of the flag, there were large monitors, 800 inches in width that could show a person speaking on the podium.

It appeared the podium had a unique writing pad upon it, and after every person dressed in suit stood upon it, they placed their personal signature. There were no fewer than fifty who went about putting their signatures, and they took turns, quietly signed off, and left the podiums. One of the large monitors showed their hands signing, another was showing the hexagonal tablet, along with the words engraved upon it. Whenever there was a new signature on the podium, the crane arm would move along and engrave the same signature on the edge of the hexagon. One by one, the signatures of the various global representatives were added, harkening the completion of the stone tablet that was the Universal Century charter—

“On the last day of Anno Domini…the day the Universal Century began, that thing was completed.”

Syam said. The contents of the charter remained a secret before it was released, so it must have been a pre-record. There were none in the reporters' booth, and few attendees to the event. The only ones present were the representatives who signed it off, along with their families, and involved personnel. Banagher stared at the "Laplace Box" that was about to be born.

It was the Eve 96 years ago…hours before they would change to the Universal Century, the last day of Anno Domini. The monitors and other facilities were relatively old, but the appearances were none too distinct from the present. The people on hologram appeared to be within reach, passing by before him, slowly agitating the solemn mood of "Laplace".

"Races, religions, countries…the Federation government was created as an absolute mediator for disputes and negotiations between many parties with their own vested interest. They know this stone tablet shall bind the spacenoids in the future, and become the basis of the space migration completion. It will end with far too many abandoned into space…but this cruel act is the only way to save the dying Earth, for humanity to live on. They have known of their own sins, and shall shine a ray of goodwill into the distant future. "

These words resonated with something buried deep within his heart, the hologram before his eyes filled with flesh and blood. "Goodwill…" The ghosts from a hundred years ago passed through the muttering Banagher, and he walked over while staring intently. Which country's representative was that? The old gentleman in suit exchanged words with a representative dressed in Arabic clothing, before returning to his seat with his family awaiting him. Hopping off the seats was a five year old boy, definitely the grandson. There was some block noise on the old gentleman as he carried the boy, and Banagher was reminded that it was a visual.

"They added this 'future' chapter, intending to entrust it to certain lifeforms who shall surpass themselves, the present. This irresponsible prayer…was entrusted to humans a thousand years later, tens of thousands of years. That night, they unleashed the god called possibilities between space and Earth. Yet they did not know they would be shattered immediately, imprisoned in the "Box" for a hundred years…"

The boy ignored his mother's reproach as he sat on the old gentleman's knees. The latter patted his grandson's head, whispering a few words, before his smile faded immediately as he stared at the stone tablet with bitterness, as though lamenting this was the most he

could do, and also seemingly saying to his young grandson that this was the only thing he could leave for them.

“It was a box containing the new covenant between humanity and the world…there was no god’s name. Following that was the last judgment, and surely it was the stalemate wrought by our souls, that everything shall be decided upon our hands, so that man said.”

The visual changed, showing the situation that happened ‘that night’. The reflective lens would change angle at night, ensuring that the sunlight would not shine into “Laplace”. He could see a man standing on the brightly lit podium. The arena was thoroughly packed, and there was an array of cameras from the reporters’ seats. The first prime minister of the Federation government had his back turned upon the stone tablet, the Universal Century charter that was covered in cloth, speaking to the masses with a gentle look. The voice of the ghost echoing in “Laplace *was his. Ricardo Marcenas' eyes were sparkling due to the bright lights shining upon him, the colors resembling Riddhe’s ingrained deeply in Banagher’s vision.*

“An ever-changing future that is filled with all sorts of hidden possibilities. Don’t be troubled about other people writing the scripts in my life. To use the God in me to look clearly at the future…these were the words said to none other than myself, the pitiful youth who was manipulated by the script others have written, and blew up “Laplace”… I too saw that ‘light’.”

Syam narrowed his eyes as he looked up at the podium, the eyes similar to Banagher’s in color filled with some light. His eyes overlapped that with the boy who had visualized the stone tablet, and the moment Banagher was about to approach the bed, a sudden flash filled the arena.

The light retaining windows on the ceiling were shattered, the cylindrical residential area consumed by the colors of flames. The audience were blown up along with their seats, and as the venue was eroded, Ricardo Marcenas was sucked away from the podium, into space, and the noisy visual was cut off.

The all-view screens then switched to show the external appearance of Laplace. The donut ring was twisted, the heaps of material, external panels and glass had been shattered from within, scattered everywhere. The torrent pelted upon the two refractive mirrors above and below the donut ring, twisting the axis shaft in the core. This was the fate of the prime minister residence “Laplace” that had been seen many times on historical documentaries aired on TV…Banagher had no time to look towards Audrey next to him as he stared at the

countless shrapnel floating in space. The torn outer panels were mixed together with the steel frames, and the people sucked into space were devoured by death, unable to look back at their families in time. This would include the old gentleman and the boy on his knees.

The mirrors lost their light, and all the warning lights had vanished, “Laplace” itself becoming a dark wasteland drifting in low orbit. The twisted donut slowly began to erode, the endlessly dispersing shrapnel scattering powdered light in all directions. One of them was giving off a strong light, a silver one, slowly approaching them. The hexagonal stone tablet was released from its seat, drifting aimlessly in space, the frosted air engulfing it like lamé, it slowly revolved as it got increasingly big, the words engraved on it reflecting the distant sunlight.

“With a once in a billion chance, I encountered the stone tablet of “Laplace”…the kindness upon which it showed me the ‘light’, the ‘light’ dedicated to the distant future. It told me everything is dedicated to a person’s kindness, and shall return to the ‘light’…if it has not all turned to regimentation, it will lose its light, swallowed by the lives of billions, to be returned to the “Box” that will never be opened.”

The words were merely words, but if one did not accept it wholeheartedly, it was all a mindless spiel. Banagher accepted the reality, neither feeling doubtful nor disappointed, as he saw the bedridden Syam reach the hand out towards the stone tablet. In his youth, the latter was guided by coincidence in an encounter with the stone tablet, and the sidelong face reminiscent of Banagher was shown..

“But if there is just one person, out of thousands, who can sense this ‘light’, he will know that the world is not completely built on despair, just like me…that ‘light’ shall forever remain in their hearts, residing deep within their souls, carrying on for generations…it will believe that until all of humanity, the ‘light’ shall remain, no matter how weak it is, along with the god called possibilities…”

The stone tablet in the visual became the actual, and the boy’s face shown on it resonated with Banagher’s. At that moment Banagher felt that he had inherited everything. His legs grew tense, not wanting to cave to the pressure.

It was no restraining bolt, and it was not built just for redemption. It was all out of goodwill, to show the possibilities for those who inherited that kindness. Banagher held Audrey’s hand firmly, gaining courage from the tightly clasped hand, and turned to directly face the stone tablet called the “Laplace Box”. Would it become a prayer to be heard everywhere, or would it beckon destruction as a curse? It was not

something he alone could decide, so he gathered his concentration, hearing the voices of the masses gathered in this cryo.

“It does not matter whether it’s just or unjust, but it is necessary to them. They need to have something to believe that there is still room for kindness, to fight the despair, and to live on the cruel, shackled world…”

“It is no curse. It is a prayer.”

“Probably the only one capable of piloting it is the pilot’s heart. It is a heart that easily empathizes, is easily hurt, a hurt that causes terror in others. It is weak, lacking efficiency, and some even feel it is better not to exist—”

“How sad. We lived on to cast away our sadness…why did this happen…?”

“It’s been almost a hundred years since mankind first lived in space. We cannot just accept rules for what they are; whatever we should change, we need to.”

“An individual is powerless, but personal wills banded together can pull the world back from the dark abyss. Don’t let the situation crush you. If you’re a Newtype, summon your courage, and force back all thoughts of despair.”

“The inherited ideals that surpass years will continue to evolve, linking to the future. The peak at the very end are Newtypes, don’t you think so?”

“Those who despair about the future now have no right to talk about the future. The future is the result of today. If we continue to remain in the darkness, the future we hope for will never arrive. If we do not walk to the light, we will…”

The many words that formed who he was at this point caused the humanoid-shaped ‘light’ to throb and resonate, forming a situation. Yes, I cannot decide the fate of the “Box” without finding an answer everyone can accept. Banagher closed his eyes, and finally listened to his father’s voice linger deep within his consciousness.

“There is a certain thing surpassing the present, one the human senses can’t feel…it may be what people call god, or may be a delusion borne out of human wishes. But by believing in its existence and nudging the world on, we can possibly change relationship.”’

Only the humans had god, and they could create their ideal, exerting greater strength as they tried to approach the ideal.The people

gathered in “Laplace” a hundred years ago weaved a prayer for the future, showing Syam the ‘light’. The ‘light’ changing his reality’ continued to glow within him. It passed on over generations, and was about to return to him.

“The possibilities within us shall show humanity’s power and kindness to the world…it is a necessary responsibility for humans seeking an exit in space. Do not fear, and go believe, believe in your possibilities. Believe, do whatever you can, and you’ll naturally forge a path on. Do what you feel you should do.”

Even though the ‘light’ lasted only a moment, even though it could not shine upon all of humanity, and would be merely a candle to be devoured by the unchanging future—Banagher widened his eyes, staring at Audrey and himself reflected upon the stone tablet. There existed the beast of possibility in the silver mirror, along with her heart. Just as the ancients left a poem, the two profiles shown on the silver plate merged together, the words engraved on it slowly appearing.

“This is, my ‘one desire’.”

Syam said, losing his appearance as a youth as he returned to being a husk lying on the bed. Banagher bore not the time experienced, but the eyes and voice from Syam as he turned towards the bed seemingly floating in space.

“Every person’s ‘desire’ is different. What are you hoping for? Wishing for…?”

The answer was already decided. Banagher checked his clenched palms, took a deep breath, let go of Audrey’s hand, and took a step forward.

“If the Newtypes are what the new humans should be like…I suppose current humans have no ability to decipher. They simply use the name for convenience sake, as a way to describe those with supernatural abilities.”

The words spoken left Banagher himself stunned, his eyes neither agreeing nor disagreeing as he exchanged looks with Syam, continuing on undaunted.

“I am recognized by the “Unicorn”, but only by the machine. There is nothing proving I’m a real Newtype. I don’t think I have the nature you desire, and I don’t know what the best choice is.”

Banagher took another step forward. He could sense Audrey following him from behind. Supported by Cardeas, Marida, and many others, he

looked towards Syam's face that was within reach.

"But as a human, I am here because of you, because of my father. As a part of humanity that had gradually progressed through the ages…I have the answer."

Audrey agreed, her body warmth reaching him along with her fragrance. Her warmth overlapped with his, resonating, creating a new passion required for the next era, and he stood before his great grandfather as a cog in the chain. Syam stared back with a silent look, and averted his eyes without probing further, for he understood without having to ask. The grim look vanished from Syam's face, and showed the first smile they ever saw from him.

"I am already prepared."

Syam closed his eyes once, and then opened them again, his eyes reflecting the cluster of stars in the sky. At the same time, the cryo floor shook, and something was rumbling deeply, causing the air in the room to shake.

Unless the explosions from before, it was a deep tremor that shook the "Magallanica" to the core. Syam remained silent as the tremors got bigger, shaking the cryo floor without pause. Banagher and Audrey grabbed each other, warily lifting their heads towards the starry skies shaken by the tremors.

Part 15[edit]

The explosive bolts set at regular intervals were ignited one after another, severing the joints. Hundreds of explosion rings surrounded the round cylinder exceeding five hundred meters in circumference, slightly shaking the connector linking the "Magallanica" and "Industrial 7", the docking bays on both sides disengaged and starting to split.

While still under construction, the mass of the "Industrial 7" 20 kilometers in length was incomparable to the colony builder at its tip. Unlike a colony remaining in a fixed orbit, the "Magallanica" appeared to be bouncing off, but it was not the kinetic energy caused by the explosion. The structure resembling a snail exuded its thrusters in all directions, and the "Magallanica" shook its massive body of 6,500 meters, breaking free from "Industrial 7" using its own thrust. The bow slowly turned around, the turbines gathered at the wheels gave a weak glow, the rocks absorbed upon the revolving residential block showing cracks all over.

The massive rocks cut from the mineral-rich asteroids were eroded from within when building the colony, but they retained their

appearance when clinging onto the “Magallanica”. At this point, this pile of rocks were showing cracks due to the inner pressure, the rocks of various sizes scattered everywhere, the skin clinging onto the snail shell peeled in blocks. The numerous scatter rocks became a vortex, the torrent of meteorites dispersing near “Industrial 7”, and the “Magallanica” broke free from the colony as it activated its thrusters, the flares as big as a big warship blaring away. The colony builder appeared to be on autopilot as it quivered silently, the rocks crushed by its massive frame and dispersing everywhere.

The rocks remained hundreds of meters in diameter even after being shattered, grazing the hastily retreating “Nahel Argama”. The white object drifting by the vortex of brown might have appeared to be one of the scattered rocks. Sirens blared all over the ship as Otto stared at the torrent through the bridge window. The relative velocity was not fast, but every piece was overly massive, and the“Nahel Argama” shall be shattered to smithereens if a rock heavier than the ship crashed into it.

“Accelerate the turbines! Pull the ship back, hurry!”

Liam gave the first command as she sat on the vice commander seat. Otto sensed an urge to steer aside before awaiting his command, “Don’t move!” so he bellowed.

“It’s safer to follow the “Magallanica”. Maintain relative distance at 0.5, fix position before the docking bay!”

Liam, seated in her chair, turned around in shock, only to repeat the command loudly. If the “Magallanica” was to steer back at this distance, the “Nahel Argama” would be crushed, but the chances of survival would be higher than getting caught in the meteorite torrent. As he looked up at the “Magallanica” docking bay that blocked the starboard view completely, “What in the world happened…” he muttered. They lost all communications with Conroy and the dispatch forces, and nobody knew the whereabouts of the Red Comet that had invaded. Who started the “Magallanica” , and for what reason? Even disposing of the mineral asteroid used to build the colony—

“The nuclear pulse engine has been ignited. Is it really going to break free from “Industrial 7”…”

Liam said as she stared at the monitor visual feed from the ball shaped camera. The plasma accelerating link was proof of the “Magallanica” thrusters being in operation. If the bow and stern of the residential block had a helium-3 tank, it would mean the “Magallanica” had the ability to navigate to the Jupiter Celestial sphere alone. As he stared at

the engine blares of the nuclear pulse push the massive body akin to the size of a small colony. “But, why in the world…” Otto was about to comment, “Over there! Expand that!” Zimmerman suddenly shouted, nearly causing the former’s heart to jolt over.

The ball camera visual zoomed in phases, enlarging the shell of the revolving residential block as the rock plates peeled from it. Beyond the flying dust, there was a silver glow from the cylinder buried amongst the rock, and Otto felt terrified for some reason. It was not just one cylinder, but 500m in length, nearly 100m in diameter, and there were two pairs of nine animal limb-like legs on both top and bottom of the circumference in a radial shape. Were they the refineries used to extract minerals from the rocks and transported to the “Magallanica” factories…? This logical train of thought was immediately broken by the following phenomenon, leaving Otto and the other gasping.

There were countless shutters opening on the side of the cylinder, revealing two mega particle cannons. Many dark holes could be seen from the neighbor shutters, probably barrels for large missiles. Other shutters opened as well, and the smooth cylindrical surface became a complex protrusion. Anti-air missile launchers, mega particle cannons equipped with I-field generators to spread them

“This is…”

Zimmerman groaned, and was left speechless. “There too!” Mihiro shouted, and the command module at the tip, the main body of the “Magallanica”, opened its shutters like a long snail body, and CIWS cannons started propping out. The body itself was overly massive, and the CIWS cannons were so small to be seen, but they were not all randomly placed. They were lined along the top and bottom of the cannons surrounding the revolving residential block. Otto immediately understood the position must have been pre planned in its design, and the rocks were just a disguise. He stared at the “Magallanica” with trepidation, and the massive body abandoned its rocky exterior as it slowly emerged from the torrent of rocks. The piles of cylinders shook off the dust as they basked in the moonlight, and the armaments were reflecting light distinctly.

“This isn’t some colony builder. It’s a fortress…a huge battleship.”

Zimmerman muttered as though groaning, and nobody disagreed. Otto's mind was stumbling as he bellowed the only question he could think of, "What about the enemy unit that gotin!? Have we not made contact with ECOAS?" The bridge crew reeled as they focused on their controls. The "Magallanica" finally revealed its true appearance as it pulled its distance from "Industrial 7".

There was no air distortion, so the scenery simply resembled a spaceship about to move. It would be ridiculous to imagine the ship being 6,500 meters in length if not for "Industrial 7" in the background. The "Nahel Argama" stuck close to the revolving residential block, and resembled more like a small shuttle in comparison.

There was one ship exceeding 1km making a two-way trip to Jupiter, but such a 'ship' itself was unprecedented. As he remained wary of the incoming rocky rubble, Riddhe stared at the "Magallanica" through the main camera of the "Banshee". Yes, it was a ship. The rocks that had gathered upon it had vanished, and one could see it was originally designed for navigation.

"So that's the true appearance of the "Magallanica" …"

It was the space colony builder “Magallanica” no, the space battleship “Magallanica” was the perfect description as he spotted many cylinders appearing at the base of the rocks. The barrels of cannons and missile launchers seemed to imply sufficient firepower to match a battleship. There was no other reason to think why it was built, and Riddhe stepped on the pedal in a daze. As the “Banshee” began to advance, a bunch of spinning rocks closed in from up close, passing the black machine by while it evaded away. The rocks grazed the Base Jabber approaching from behind, and the flat tank carrying its cargo shook like leaves.

The Base Jabber managed to evade in the nick of time, activating its thrusters as it dodged the cluster or rocks. Alberto sat upon the bumpy seat as he stared at the “Magallanica”. Due to such irregularities during the repairs, the engine was not completely stable. The Lieutenant held onto the sticks firmly, and just maneuvering around was wearing him out. “We’re breaking off!” his voice echoed in Alberto’s ears with a heaviness cutting through the latter’s body.

At this point, Alberto could not say no, and he did not answer as he observed the “Magallanica”. Since the “Box” had such a secret, it was not surprising that the “Magallanica” concealing it had weapons. It probably was an automated defense system at work. The problem however was that it was too obvious. The sight of the “Magallanica” shaking off its minerals had been captured by the approaching “General Revil” and the people watching from Earth. It was unlikely that they would remain inactive when faced with such a drastic change.

“Not good…”

The colony laser shall fire. Alberto, having already forsaken everything and apathetic, felt a shiver through his body as he looked around. Through the meteorites, he searched for the “Banshee”, and shouted into the wireless, “Riddhe, can you hear me?” Even with the Minovsky particles interfering, they could still communicate, but the “Banshee” did not respond immediately. The black machine appeared to be waiting for something. Beyond it, the “Magallanica” shook off the rocks and turned its bow, the revolving residential block lit by the moonlight, giving off a strong glow.

Part 16[edit]

Beyond the increasingly sparse rocks, one could see “Industrial 7” slowly moving away. It was then half blocked by a new display window, and the 3D profile of the battleship “Magallanica” was projected.

There were at least ten hologram windows being deployed, showing the conditions of the nuclear pulse engines, along with the data of the 36 weapon pods. While it appeared they were in the bridge of a large battlefiship, the only thing they could do in the cryo was to watch, and the various controls appeared to be gathered in the bridge. Banagher searched for clues through the window, and stared at the "Magallanica" full scale map amidst the wire frames, but he was distracted by the various other windows popping out one after another.

All the names and positions of the central satellite visuals within the Earth Celestial Sphere were identified, from the military laser communications to the satellites operated by civilian communications companies. There were at least a thousand of these artificial satellites gathered around Earth and the moon, along with the satellites surrounding the 7 Sides. This data then vanished one after another, and Banaghr looked towards Syam's face that was lit by the reflection of the monitors. The "Magallanica" wire frame was enlarged, as though blocking their vision, and the comms area near the bow was blinking red.

"The facilities here can interfere with all signals and broadcast systems in the Earth Celestial Sphere. The Federation army will do its best to jam, but this ship can withstand such a level of physical barrage, at least long enough for you to do whatever you should do."

Syam remained still on the bed as he looked up, merely commenting away. Did he prepare a central satellite facility to broadcast anywhere? It was not something that could be easily assembled even with the organization ability of the Vist Foundation—no, perhaps for Syam, the Vist Foundation was created for this very purpose, and it could. All of Banagher's shock had gone numb, as he repeated the terms like jamming, physical bombardments and the like, sensing the gravity of these words as he clenched his hands. The changes to the "Magallanica" had been detected, and the Federation government would surely not stay idle in the face of a situation that could overturn the century of status quo.

"The broadcast content is pre-recorded…but Your Highness Mineva, I wish you will personally deliver the message. Your words have the kindness to reach people's hearts. As for Banagher…do you understood?"

This "Magallanica" was a real fortress, and Banagher was needed to protect it at all costs, until the "Box" was opened, and until the broadcast was made. As he looked at Syam's eyes, Banagher nodded in unison with a lightly inhaling Audrey.

“The beast of possibilities…the “Unicorn” shall grant you strength. The lion appears to be waiting outside too.”

Syam’s li[s curled into a smile as his eyes stared towards the display showing an external footage. From amidst the drifting meteorites floating in space, Banagher identified the black “Banshee” blending into the darkness, his heart suddenly feeling hurting.

The black machine seemed to have a desire to approach, only to hesitate as it merely watched the “Magallanica” from a certain distance. It appeared to be waiting for something. Would Riddhe too accept this choice? Banagher no longer thought of him as the enemy who shot down Marida, and recalled the resonating feelings they felt. “Banagher…!”Audrey shrieked, and he turned around in shock.

Audrey covered her mouth as she stared at an erratically breathing Syam looking in pain. The latter’s already pale skin was losing the color of blood, gradually turning pale like paper. Banagher recalled the scene of his mother’s death, and immediately dashed towards the bed.

“Syam…gramps!”

The words he said ignited the the sentimental feelings of flesh and blood. In his memories, he recalled his father bringing him to the bedside, and saw a completely wrinkled sidelong face from the edge of the bed—you got to be kidding, please don’t do this to me. We finally just met, and I’m going to lose him again. I don’t want to experience this a second time. He passed through a few upright displays, intending to approach the bed. “Don’t come here!” only to be stopped by a sharp tone. Syam’s lingering breathing was gathered upon his eyes, creating an invisible wall, giving off a stronger glint than the displays as he stared at Banagher..

“There’s no time. Do what you have to do.”

“But you’ll…!”

“My time as the custodian has ended. It was decided beforehand.”

The headband wrapped around his forehead was blinking red, along with a display. The physical body had lived at least a century through repeated cryo sleep, and the life support was cut off once the “Magallanica” awoke. Was Syam’s life the last key to open the “Laplace Box”? Banagher found it to be really ridiculous, but at the same time, he had a feeling that syam was the type of person to do so, to force Banagher himself to stand before the bed, not knowing what to do. So Syam closed his eyes, “Go on, Banagher.” He said silently.

“A person’s life is very short. Being alone is merely a meaningless, instant moment of ‘light’. That is why you have to love others. In despair, seek out the best thing to do. Only by continuing on and resonating will the ‘light’ gain meaning.”

Everything relied not on words. The souls resonating with the hearts could turn all the accepted words into a ‘prayer’, or a ‘curse’. Banagher sensed that he was carrying a new “Box” as he nodded silently, and Syam’s eyes flickered slightly. Forgive me, so his thoughts reached Banagher silently, looking a little anguished. He closed his eyes, falling limp into the bed, the wrinkles by his lips showing traces of suffering, yet he was giving a peaceful smile at that moment.

“Go light it up, and make contact with that ‘light’ of possibilities.”

Once he said those words, Syam did not open his eyes anymore. The headband stopped blinking, and a deep silence gathered upon the body that had lived a long time. “Mr Syam…” so Audrey muttered, wanting to approach, but Banagher grabbed her shoulder, watching the custodian who had fulfilled his duty.

Banagher had inherited the curse and prayer, and there was no turning back. The battle that would span a lifetime was about to begin—he hopped off the ground shaking with the nuclear pulse engine, facing a still Audrey. The all view screens vanished one after another, leaving behind weak lights in the cryo. As her emerald eyes sparkled, he looked back at them, determined that he would not run away again. He looked towards the rocks flowing to the back, swa that the “Magallanica” and the “Nahel Argama” were safe, “Let’s go.” And said so to Audrey.

“Everyone is waiting.”

Everyone, not just the people gathered. There were other countless ‘lights’ that had yet to wake, embraced by the cradle called space. At the bottom of Earth’s gravity, there were many ‘lights’ that did not know where to fly to, waiting to encounter the possibilities locked in the “Box”. With quivering eyes, Audrey met Banagher’s, nodded, and they took the first step out of the cryo.

The cryo doors opened, guiding lights flickering like bonfire as they opened the way in just as they entered. They would be entering a comms area that could connect and broadcast throughout the Earth Celestial Sphere. Banagher recalled the “Magallanica” wire frame he saw, and for the last time, looked at the bed Syam slumbered in.

Syam’s face remained unmoved as he laid on the bed in the void,

looking at the stars. He found his one wish at the very end of his life. The man's face was lit by the stars, the cryo filled with a genial atmosphere. Without looking back, Banagher left the cryo. The road was dark and cold, and he held hands with Audrey, feeling the warmth as it became his only pillar.

Part 17[edit]

The ship left the meteorites behind in the void as the ship devoured the "Laplace Box", flying through the shoal space region. While it had shed its rocky shell and lost its appearance as a living creature, it then showed what appeared to be rumbling legs, maintaining its appearance as a snail. The only difference was the countless protrusions from the edge of the revolving residential block, and it appeared to have legs on both sides, but nobody in the "Kavkaz Forest" paid any heed to that.

The target began to move, and there was no further report. All in the control room remained still with bated breath as they watched the colony builder move on the monitor. This included Ronan, the speechless Martha, along with Bright. "Industrial 7" slowly moved sideways on the screen. "Target has left the colony completely." The report was clear and obvious, the tense mood in the room subsided.

"Correct the coordinates immediately! The 'system' may be able to fire now. Don't forget to account for Earth's gravitational effect!"

Aibres, standing on the commander seat and thinking he had reacted quickly, yelled alone before looking towards Ronan. The latter looked aside, towards the "Magallanica" that had taken on its true appearance as a battleship, understanding that they could no longer drag this on, letting out a heavy sigh. There was no time to hesitate. The "Magallanica" itself was the "Laplace Box", and its initial movements signified that—

"Looks like we have an answer."

Martha said. Ronan exchanged looks with her, concealing his emotions as he looked towards the other monitors displaying the "Gryphios 2". Doing this foolish thing…though Ronan wanted to curse, there was nothing he could salvage. The answer was revealed, and the "Box" was to be opened, that the administration was to be entrusted to the Newtypes who had adapted to space—he could not let the curse his ancestors left behind be revealed in the world where Zeon and the Newtypes were not completely eradicated.

"Execute."

He said, but did not feel anything. “Yes!” Aibres answered, and looked at the operators. The commands echoed, and the originally silent control room seemed to regain some life, but it was a different world to Ronan altogether. The hundred year curse would vanish, and the Marcenas and the Vists would bear the same guilt. Ignoring Martha’s gleeful expression, Ronan’s eyes stared at the “Magallanica” that the colony laser was aiming at, “Wait a moment!” A bellow echoed from behind.

“The “Nahel Argama” is still there. Are you really intending to scorch them as well?”

Bright’s questioning eyes were oozing outrage as he stormed into Ronan’s sights, the latter remained silent, the cringe on his face the only response.

“At the very least, we should coax them to retreat. If this keeps up—”

“Are you serious? The “Magallanica” is already moving on its out. If we tell the “Nahel Argama” to retreat, it will escape together.”

Martha had her arms folded as she spoke with impatience. “But…!” Bright bellowed, but Martha ignored him, “And then it will release the poison elsewhere.” She continued with a cold voice, and Ronan sighed.

“A real poison, is it not? There is no other chance to prevent infection..”

Bright clenched his fists as he gave a questioning glare at Ronan, Is that what you think too? Ronan did not look back, instead answering with continued silence, and he sensed Bright turning to leave. The surrounding mood suddenly shook, “Where are you going?” Martha questioned.

“I can’t sit back and remain idle when this is just murder, even if it is for the sake of protecting the order.”

An adamant voice echoed behind Ronan, and Bright’s footsteps rang again, but the faint metallic sounds stopped him, a tense atmosphere lingering in the room. “I should have said so.” Martha sounded as though she was not bothered to check on Bright, and Ronan looked back over his shoulder, seeing this scene that was to be expected.

“You are an accomplice. Watch until the very end with us.”

Martha coldly stated, and the guards next to her had raised their assault rifles, the metal hooks on the straps clanking away. Bright gritted his teeth while surrounded by many guns, and Ronan did not look in his eyes as he turned forward, his back facing them in this

unacceptable outcome.

Perhaps his one redemption was not involving Riddhe in this. Ronan recalled the stiff sidelong face the last time they met. Once he found himself wondering where Riddhe was, he cut off her thoughts, and stared at the “Magallanica” on the monitor. The large ship ferrying the “Box” drifted solemnly in the end, seemingly not knowing its fate to be eradicated.

Part 18[edit]

The spiral gates opened, the noise of steel folding aside echoed in the vast empty space. The white frame of the “Unicorn” kicked off the floor in this space that had regained zero gravity, and floated out of the elevator.

The hatch slid along the inner walls of the revolving residential block shaft, the elevator block remaining in the dark as before. There was nothing else moving aside from the “Unicorn”, the machine’s rumbling noises echoing away, yet Banagher felt a tense ‘presence’ lingering around. He recalled the explosions that had reached the cryo, and he had the main camera look around. He did not see the 920 “Loto” that should be present, just some charred debris, seemingly from the industrial block, drifting about and emptily reflecting the night lights.

“Mr Conroy, “Nahel Argama”, this is the “Unicorn”. Please respond if you hear me. We’re back at the elevator block.”

Audrey, seated in the assistant seat, called into the wireless, but there was no response, only noise echoing in the ears. Gael and the others in the 729 “Loto *were supposed to be in the gravity block, but they had vanished. Did they proceed to fight the Neo Zeon pursuers? The floating wreckage might have been the scars left behind by the battle, and Banagher’s tense look met Audrey’s. “Shall we return to the “Nahel Argama* first?” so she worriedly asked, “No need.” Banagher responded, summoning the 3D map of the “Magallanica *on the monitor.*

“Let’s go. If the pursuers have entered, they might try to destroy the “Magallanica” from the inside. It’ll be over if the comms modules are wrecked.”

No matter how powerful a fortress was, it could not last long when being destroyed from the inside. Once he sensed Audrey nodding behind, Banagher piloted the “Unicorn” down the road they came from, towards the industrial block.

His eyes scanning for enemies, Banagher stared into the darkness,

and went towards the ship using the 3D map given from the cryo. The revolving residential block of the “Magallanica” was maintained by the board-shaped axis shaft and the ship area, and the only way to the comms modules was through the tunnel within that shaft. If the revolving residential block could be described as a giant wheel, the board structure would be the wheel fork holding up the axle. The board was approximately 700m in length, and as it was purposed for goods transportation, it was large enough for a mobile suit to pass through, and the “Unicorn” flew to the very end in an instant.

They then took a detour down the path to the mass driver, large enough for a mobile suit to pass through, basically a straight path down. The path towards the shp was relatively cramped, and even for transporting goods, it was barely large enough for a small mobile suit to pass through. Banagher stopped the”Unicorn” before the mass driver rail, opened the helmet visor, waited for Audrey to do the same, and opened the cockpit door.

This block was filled with air, so there was not much difference in air pressure within the cockpit. However, there might be enemies waiting prone in this darkness, and a chill seep through his pilot suit. Banagher pulled the automatic handgun from the ankle strap, slid the chamber as he learned from the movies, and a hard sound echoed as the first round was loaded, and the steel instantly became a dangerous item, the weight felt through his palm.

“You know how to use it?”

“Impossible.”

It was the gun Conroy once gave Banagher, who had it with him the entire time, never even brandishing it once. He did not look at Audrey’s nervous look, made up his mind, and left the cockpit.

Audrey followed him out of the cockpit, and the duo landed upon the cargo entrance. The passageway about 7, 8 meters in width was overly massive for a body of flesh and body. It appeared to be built for mini mobile suits and construction machinery to pass through, so there was nothing to latch upon, just a tunnel dimmed by the night lights into the distance. There should be passages for humans to use, but they were complex like a maze, and easy to get lost in when there was no map. Banagher determined it would be faster to use a gun, and with his hand holding the gun he was still uncomfortable with, he took the first step

For every 50m or so, there was a cross junction leading to the sides, each entrance having an arrowhead and a serial number of every

block. Banagher suddenly opened his visor, partially to stand guard against an enemy that might attack suddenly, or to feel the outside air. At every junction, he would lean his body on the wall, and peer by the junction, before running past the zero gravity tunnels. Once they got into the ship area, they could easily approach the comms in the "Magallanica" central module using the lift grips, and could hijack all broadcast and communication facilities within the Earth Celestial Sphere. They were almost there.

"Will I alone be able to get everyone to understand?"

Right when they were about to pass the 50th crossing, a mutter entered Banagher's ears, and he nearly tripped over as he looked back. Audrey's head was lowered, her face concealed by the helmet, her expression unclear.

"The thoughts of Mr Syam, and those who left the stone tablet…"

"You can do it. Just say what you feel."

Banagher embraced her shoulders, his feet landing on the cross junction. They leaned on the wall, saw that there was nobody at the junction, and he looked at her face. Her emerald eyes looked a little gloomy as she looked back at his face.

"If there's no emotion in the messenger, the words are just information. We accepted the wishes of those who left the "Box" behind, so this time, we can definitely do it, and we have to, through our own words."

"But I do not know if it is appropriate …"

"Just say what you want. Someone will surely feel your wishes—"

At that moment, a frosty killing intent rained upon Banagher, shushing him.

"That is just self-conceited of you, young Banagher."

A familiar voice rang from the other side, within the darkness the night lights could not reach. Banagher nudged a stiffened Audrey behind him, staring at the shadow forming in the darkness. 'He' gathered and icy 'presence', the footsteps tapping loudly in the tunnel, and a human could be seen within the dim lights.

"Letting your thoughts reach others completely is simply brainwashing. I suppose that is how you destroyed Angelo."

The red profile was lit by the night lights, the helmet reflecting a dull light. It was their first time seeing him wearing a pilot suit, and

considering the functions, it was a tid light, but there were excessive functions on the fine areas. The suit was pretty much completely red, other than the life function vests, the black on the shoulders pads and the sleeves, along with the golden Neo Zeon emblem—

“You can destroy other Newtypes just upon contact…and now you want to destroy this world too?”

The masked face showed a mocking sneer beneath the red helmet. Ignoring how his muscles tensed up, Banagher raised the handgun in his hands

“I had enough of your despair!”

Banagher yelled, and aimed his gun at the masked face. Full Frontal showed no fear, the massive body looming from the darkness, lit by the night light, the blurry shadows extended all over the intersection. Banagher took on the killing intent that was overly massive for a body of flesh and blood, grounding his feet as he knew he could not take a step back.

Part 19[edit]

“…729’s shot down…the enemy unit…is at the command module… we’re…)

Conroy’s interrupted voice rang amidst the noise. The ship did its best to get into position, but the signal did not seem to have improved. Otto looked towards the portside window, the imposing revolving residential block of the “Magallanica”. “Haven’t we found the “Unicorn”s position!?” he bellowed into the microphone, but there was increasing noise responding to him, the obstructed voice echoing raspy in the bridge

“The gravity block is already…Banagher and the others too…”

These were the final words, and all communications were broken up. Half of the dispatch ECOAS forces were sacrificed to the intruders, and they could not grasp the location of the “Unicorn”. As he reflected upon this worst case scenario, Otto looked towards the comms. Liam handed the ear headset to Mihiro, and gave Otto a worried look, hissing,

“We can’t contact the Tri-Stars either.”

“The “Magallanica” is giving off powerful electromagnetic waves, powerful enough to burn any living body to crisp when up close. Looks like it can fire laser comms too …”

“And the content is?”

“Not sure. Looks like some code. It’s coming from many locations, starting to move, probably to an area where the comms can reach.”

Even in the shoal space region filled with much debris, there were many positions to fire laser comms depending on the location. This would be the most location deduction given how the thrusters of the “Magallanica” were extinguished, but where was it primed at, to whom? Otto was silenced by the massive ship appearing to be in autopilot, and gulped for the umpteenth time, as he suddenly thought of something, “Get Aaron the technician here.” So he ordered.

“He used to work on the “Magallanica”. Maybe he knows something.”

He knew the chances of that were slim, but there was no other way. If they did nothing, their minds would be filled with the worst case scenario, and his mind would crumble in a panic. From the side of his eyes, he saw Liam prepare to call for Aaron, “What about the “Rewloola”?” and asked the sensor operator. “We’re currently seeing it on the optical sensors.” A tense voice echoed.

“It’s coming towards us. Will be within firing range in thirty minutes, though not acting extraordinarily. It doesn’t seem to have deployed any mobile suit.”

“Keep waiting. If the enemy that entered the “Magallanica” is Frontal, there’s probably some code out there—”

“Captain! It’s Romeo 008 …Ensign Riddhe’s messaging us!”

Unexpected words came from the comms, and the already panicking bridge suddenly faltered. Otto looked back at Mihiro, the latter clearly unable to calm down, “From Ensign Riddhe…?” he muttered again, his eyes turned towards the sensor panel.

They were unable to grasp the whereabouts of the black “Unicorn” ever since the “Magallanica” began to move. Zimmerman, seated on the cannoneer seat, had his head shake a little. “Can we get where the signal’s coming from?” Liam softly prompted the operator, and Otto took the captain’s headset. Once Liam confirmed with a look that they found him, “Switch to private line.” He ordered Mihiro.

“I’m Captain Otto of the ”Nahel Argama”. Ensign Riddhe, is that you?”

In a corner of his eye, Otto sensed Zimmerman listening intently, and his voice into the microphone was unwittingly hushed. “Leave that for later, Captain Otto.” The terse voice rippled amidst the noise, leaving Otto anxious

“Listen calmly. The colony laser is aiming at this space. We don’t know when it’s going to fire.”

The following words jolted Otto’s heart, and after his mind went blank for half a second, “What did you say…?” he barely eked out these words.

Part 20[edit]

“…Absolutely correct. The Federation fleet hasn’t shown any movement because they’re wary of getting involved. Please leave the space immediately. If you can contact it, please leave along with the “Magallanica”.”

Riddhe called into the wireless as he stepped on the pedal, letting the “Banshee” move forth. He knew the “Magallanica” was giving off strong electromagnetic waves, but the comms strength should be improved. He pricked his ears at the wireless full of noise, and looked towards the monitor, clearly seeing the severely damaged “Nahel Argama”. It was close enough to be seen with the naked eye, and the way it stuck to the belly of the “Magallanica” resembled a little fish sticking onto the body of a big fish.

The “Magallanica” possessed a myriad of armaments, and even a fleet could have much difficulty taking it down. However, the colony laser that would be fired from a 6km barrel could easily devour a massive ship of 6,500 meters length. The protrusions on both bow and stern would be instantly melted, the remaining residential block would be vaporized without a trace, and the”Nahel Argama” would merely be one of the shrapnel caught in the fire.

Riddhe was covered in cold sweat, the pits of his pilot completely damp. He opened the rear window, watching the trailing Base Jabber. According to Alberto, the Vist Foundation and the Settlement Issues Committee were colluding together to use the colony laser. It would be a misfire caused by so many mistakes, but such an act was no longer barbaric; it was asinine. Was his father part of the lot? Ever since the Dakar incident, Riddhe could only imagine his father’s predicament and mental state, his eyes drifting unwittingly towards Earth. “But we haven’t been able to contact the “Unicorn”.” Otto’s reply came.

“The “Magallanica” appears to be invaded. One of the ECOAS platoons has been eliminated.”

“The “Sleeves”?”

‘Probably Full Frontal alone.”

The Red Comet, the red mobile suit's that shushed its killing intent as it slaughtered Norm's squadron one by one. The imagery appeared in Riddhe's heart as he exerted unnecessary strength in his stick. Did the bombardment on "Industrial 7" and the "Magallanica" happen so that he could enter? The delayed understanding had Riddhe gritting his teeth. "Ensign Riddhe, regroup with us first!" Otto's replay came, and Riddhe was taken aback as he stared at the "Nahel Argama".

"There's an empty space on the mobile suit deck. No matter what happened in the past, you're still a crew member of the "Nahel Argama". Come back."

The eyes had lost all anxiety, and the white ship with some navigation lights on looked so dazzling. Riddhe found himself nearly obeying the command, only to stop the "Banshee" and face the "Magallanica" . What should I do? No, what can I do? While he pondered, the Base Jabber passed by, "Riddhe, we're going into a position where the laser comms can be fired." Alberto's voice rang.

"I'll try to get my aunt to stop the attack. We should be able to contact Earth using the "General Revil" as a relay."

"Can it work?"

"I know it's not likely, but we'll do whatever we can try, as long as there's a possibility."

The Base Jabber paid no heed to the drifting "Banshee" as its flat body, befitting the nickname of a 'clog', returned back. "Don't look away from the "Magallanica" ." Alberto reminded for the last time, and went by above Riddhe. Unlike the latter, he had already discovered what he should do. As he muttered alone to himself, Riddhe again looked towards the "Magallanica", trying his best to have the plain word of 'possibilities' roam closer to him.

The uncertain future still had room to improve. The world—as Riddhe summoned those words in his mind, he looked towards the silvery revolving residential block,reflecting the moonlight, which contained Mineva, Banagher, and the Red Comet. What appeared to be a massive mirror was beckoning the still "Banshee".

Part 21[edit]

The massive red silhouette standing a mere ten meters away was completely defenseless, and paid no heed to the gun pointed at him. He did not think that he would be shot, nor thinking that he could die. One would have suspicion that even if Banagher fired, he would have easily dodged the bullet.

No, that's not it. He knows I'm not used to wielding a gun. He thinks I won't be able to hit. He's looking down on me. In fact, Banagher himself felt that he might not be able to shoot, his fingertips clamping down on the shivering gun. He knew everything, about their thoughts, the exit to ward them off. He had been this way right from the start, that sneering mask seemed to have noticed their intents beforehand, saying that it is pointless to do anything—

"If you are planning to open the "Box", my advice is to stop."

As expected, Frontal said so before they could, taking a step forward. Banagher took a step back instinctively, his back bumping into a still Audrey behind him

"What you are going to do is only going to seal off possibilities. Secrets shall only remain as secrets, a tool to scare the Federation, and sealing it will bring real development and prosperity to the spacenoids."

"Approach me any more, and I'll fire."

Banagher leaned his shoulder on Audrey, who was unwilling to take a step back, and pointed the gun forward. However, Frontal did not stop, the magnetic boots landed once, twice on the floor. "I told you." His intimidating voice echoed.

"It is a mistake to be overly expectant of humanity and the world. Humans don't change, and they don't learn. They're born from the darkness, and return to the darkness. They're merely a flash lasting not more than an instance."

"Move aside, Full Frontal. Save your words. You don't believe in humanity's future!"

Audrey poked her body over the shoulder, interrupting with a poignant voice. Frontal stopped, the lips under the mask contorted with a leer.

"Do you still not understand? Your Highness Mineva? I am your tomorrow. Those that have met humanity and the world's truth will have the same thoughts as me, just like you and young Banagher."

The cold leer had a furious Audrey wanting to step forward. Banagher blocked her off with one arm, and exchanged looks with Frontal again.

"None of these are my personal thoughts. This is simply the will of the unintelligent humans. There is no need for possibilities. The "Laplace Box" has value just by being shut. If you do not understand—"

An explosion of killing intent had Banagher's heart jolting wildly. He expected Frontal's right hand wielding the gun to move quickly, and

instinctively moved his handgun.

“I’ll kill you then.”

Frontal naturally raised the gun, the black muzzle pointed at Banagher. Two gunshots rang, the scorching air grazed the helmet, and the impacted body spun half a round, bumping Audrye aside, and falling onto the ground. Just a moment before, Banagher witnessed sparks exploding on Frontal’s face, the massive red body flying backwards.

The bright red pilot suit flew several meters back, blending into the darkness. It was a recoilless gun, but his hands went numb after firing it, and the unprecedented shivers he had as he fired the gun at someone passed through his body. Was he—dead? The recoil off the floor had both Banagher and Audrey floating, and Banagher sought Frontal’s presence as he endured the disgust in his heart. The darkness the night lights could not reach into remained heavy and intense, and he could not identify the profile that had blended in.

“Banagher…”

Audrey called with a quivering voice, her eyes widened as she stared into the darkness. Banagher did manage to hit, either out of coincidence or luck, but he did see the bullet enter the masked face. He would have assumed Frontal to be shot dead, but he dared not lower the gun as he brought his other hand close to her waist. At this moment, something within the darkness stood up, the echoed footsteps entering Banagher’s ears

Thud, thud, something gathered in the darkness, and it broke through the membrane of the darkness, seeping red under the lights, a left hand holding down the face. You’re kidding, that’s impossible. Banagher gasped as his feet landed, nearly tripping over as his mind went blank, staring at the profile before him.

“…I saw the thoughts of humanity surrounding Earth in light.”

His hand on the left side of his face, Frontal’s back was arched as he spoke with a heinous voice. The right eye on his mask shot an emotionless stare as blood kept falling between his fingertips, and Banagher heard a bone-chilling voice.

“I was swallowed by the light, pushed out of the Earth Celestial Sphere. With my own eyes, I saw the abyss of the universe.”

A red black liquid was seeping from the half of the mask that was shattered, irregular droplets formed outside the helmet. Even though the mask managed to block the bullet, such damage was abnormal,

never mind how he was able to stand up. What is that guy? Banagher wanted to run, but his legs would not obey, and he could only raise the gun weakly. The words ‘abyss of the universe’ caused him to experience another chill.

During the battle before, he saw the emptiness in Frontal’s heart. He preached that humanity was merely a flash in a pan, so was the darkness of the universe the abyss he saw? A certain Neo Zeon commander saw the light that was the collective human consciousness wrap around Earth, the light of the psycofield that eliminated the space asteroid “Axis”. He was the crux of this incident, yet he vanished—swallowed in the light, pushed out of the Earth Celestial Sphere, and saw the abyss of the universe.

“Even though I witnessed that miracle, humanity hasn’t changed. They know that change is meaningless. There’s nothing before them, and no matter where they go, there’s only the same darkness before them. Even if they finally find a way to leave the galaxy, all shall return to the darkness …”

The eye beneath the shattered mask had become twisted, along with the voice curdling the darkness. He was no longer Full Frontal, the man resembling Char, nor did he resemble human. This creature was giving a grey glint, and Banagher felt his legs turn limp.

“Are…are you really Char…?”

Frontal held down the bloodied mask as he stumbled two steps forward. “No!” Audrey yelled at this moment, charging out from behind, and she stood next to Banagher before the latter could stop her.

“I know Char. He praised me for playing the violin well. That Char Azanable is not a hollow human like you!”

The eye containing fury and anguish was giving a more intimidating pressure than the gun. She glared back at the red profile, which did not falter, “Then what am I?” he taunted back,

“The Red Comet of the “Sleeves” acts just like Char, and has voiced Char’s despair. Where is he born from though?”

“You’re created by the Republic of Zeon…Monaghan Bakharov. An enhanced human made to imitate Char.”

Audrey immediately answered, her reply shaking Banagher’s heart as a heavy hit. She ignored the stunned banagher as she stared forth with a tragic look. “Oh?” Frontal hissed, and lifted his face slightly.

“Monaghan needed pieces for the Sides to establish a co-prosperity

sphere, and yearned for a Neo Zeon as an organization for many to gather towards. The two purposes resulted in a common interest, that a puppet like you can be dubbed the Second Coming of Char. You did not fool everyone, but that everyone fooled themselves, including me. Our fragile hearts desired an existence like Char, the power he brings…redemption for each and every one of us."

The Red Comet here is just a hallucination borne from our grudges. Banagher recalled the similarly spiteful voice from the previous night, and looked towards Frontal again. As it was hollow, everyone projected their illusions on the empty mask. Once he recognized this in his own words, the darkness cracked, and the tunnel space became clear.

"This might have been the case in the beginning."

The palm pressing down on the face remained tense, and Frontal stopped leering, muttering away. Banagher sensed that on the wall behind him, there was an emergency air canister.

"But I am not hollow now. This body as a vessel has several things inside it, and shall bring forth Char's curse."

Audrey gulped lightly, and Banagher could sense her backpedalling, his eyes still on Frontal, his consciousness on the gas canister in a corner of his eyes.

"Actually, I have no idea who exactly is the person who injected this hatred and despair in this artificial body—"

Frontal immediately raised the right hand, the muzzle pointed at them, "Get down!" But Banagher yelled before then, jumping to the side as he pushed Audrye down, squeezing the trigger.

The ricochet flew about messily, one passing by Frontal as it hit the canister. Banagher was in no mood to notice his hands and the sparks from the bullet. The flash swallows his visions, creating a loud explosion that would have cratered his skull, the heat and the gales blowing above his head.

They dodged the first impact, but the impact off the wall swelled as gales of searing heat. Banagher shielded Audrey while being dragged off the floor. He spun in the air as she clung firmly onto him, and he saw the burning wall over her shoulder, along with countless shrapnel floating in the air. The partition wall started to close as a fire was detected, and Frontal too became one of it, passing through the wall towards the residential block. He did not return to the ship block they were headed, and instead vanished into the path he came, causing

Banagher to assume something was amiss.

Frontal was hiding his mobile suit. If the “Sinanju” wrecked havoc in the ship, there was no way the “Box” could open. Banagher kicked off the wall, landed on the floor, and with his back facing the searing gales, he pulled Audrey’s shoulder close. “Audrey, go ahead!” He said as he looked into her eyes, her fiery colored eyes quivering slightly.

“I’ll go chase after Frontal. Who knows what he’s going to do if we let him escape.”

“But…!”

“This is caused by my weakness. I couldn’t do anything when seeing him right before me, even though I could do it in a mobile suit.”

It was not that he did not want to kill, but that he did not want to directly accept that he killed. “Banagher…” Audrey muttered, and half the wall nudged aside the smoke, gradually blocking their path. “Go!” Banagher called as he shoved her out of his clutches.

“I’ll definitely be back. No matter what happens, I’ll return to your side.”

The emerald eyes were filled with anguish, and Audrey bit her lips firmly as she turned to leave. Right then, Banagher had an impulse to retract his words, a desire to embrace her, but he knew he should not be doing such things. Once he saw her pass through the partition, he waved aside the surrounding smoke as he wandered off in the other direction.

The wall was about to close completely, doing as it was supposed to as it stood before him. Banagher made a mad dash, reaching his body forward at the last moment, sliding through when the wall was 50cm away from the floor. Once he got into the neighboring wall, the sealed walls let out a heavy thud that echoed through the tunnel, the sounds of the flames vanishing in an instant. Audrey’s presence too vanished along with the heat, and a cold silence beckoned again, surrounding Banagher.

The enemy’s killing intent lingered in the tense darkness, just like before, but he had no time to stand and shiver. At the very least, there was no place to hide the “Sinanju”. Frontal must have come from another place, and the “Sinanju” was hidden there. Banagher raised the gun as he hopped off the floor. He felt so useless passing through the vast corridor alone, and Frontal appeared to be hiding in every single shadow he passed.

Part 22[edit]

There were 18 weapons pods facing left and right, extended at the base of the residential block like a centipede. Each was 150m in diameter, and the cylinders were 500m long. From afar, they looked clustered, but one could see up close that there was sufficient space for a mobile suit to drift through. Nigel had his “Jesta” zigzag through the forest of massive pillars, and saw the fine parts of the weapon pods decorated like bells. Nigel did not think the weapon pods had mobile suit tunnels leading to the “Magallanica” itself.

“There’s no entrance here either…”

He regretted losing the opportunity to enter the “Magallanica”, through the hole formed by the prior bombardment. He flew out from the array of weapons pods, down the cylinder of the revolving residential block, and went up. There also similar weapon pods over there, which Daryl was investigating, but the structure should be similar to the bottom. Such was Nigel’s thoughts when Daryl’s “Jesta” flew through the gap, sending a signal indicating that he too had no luck.

The “Magallanica *remained still after the docking bay was closed; the ship block seemed so reclusive. They had no choice even though the Red Comet was inside. Nigel wanted to give up and regroup with the “Nahel Argama”, and shot a vengeful look at the revolving residential block, only to be startled by an approaching alarm.*

He instinctively pulled the joystick, and the thoroughly battered “Jesta” raised its beam rifle. He expanded the window, which showed a black machine approaching his feet. Startled, Nigel realized why he did not feel any killing intent.

“Is that you, Riddhe…!?”

The golden horn glowed, and the “Banshee” raised its hands, indicating its intentions. *“Lieutenants Nigel and Daryl!”* Through the wireless, Riddhe’s voice sounded so surprised by this unexpected encounter. *“You’re alone?”‘ Daryl asked, and Nigel lowered his rifle, closing in on the “Banshee”.* “Where’s Lieutenant Watts?” *Riddhe asked before Nigel could sort out all the questions he had, and Daryl’s speechlessness echoed through the wireless.*

Nigel was reluctant to report personally, but it was his duty as leader, and he realized he would have to make many such reports to the parents and others. “Dead.” He tersely answered. ’’“That’s…””’ Riddhe was momentarily speechless, but the “Banshee” let out short thruster bursts as its black body approached the ”Jesta”. The eyes were glowing deep beyond the visor. ’’ “Lieutenant Nigel, please leave this place.””’ Riddhe’s tense voice echoed.

“The colony laser is aimed at this space. I can’t imagine how far it’ll impact. Please regroup with the ”Nahel Argama” and retreat as far as possible.””’

One might say he was smacked on the head with a sledgehammer. *“Colony laser…“Gryphios 2”!?””’ Daryl’s voice turned shrilled, and Nigel scanned the space.*

Of course, he could not see anything. He did not know that “Gryphios 2” was repaired, and could not tell where it would come from. Even though it might be positioned beyond Earth, the beam fired from the colony laser could scorch this space instantly, and all debris in its path would be vaporized without exception. A highway through the shoal space region would be formed..

“Is it aiming at the “Magallanica”…the “Laplace Box”?”

No number of weapons could stand up against a laser that could wipe out a colony. Nigel finally understood why the Federation army led by the ”General Revil” had been slow; this was the intent. He looked towards the “Magallanica” filling the all-view monitor. Those people chose to sacrifice so much, using such unscrupulous means, all to bury the secrets—as he reflected upon the rage rising in him *“That’s fine.””’ The “Banshee” replied and turned to leave, “Wait”, but Nigel called for him.*

“How’s the people inside?”

”It seems like they have made contact with the dispatch ECOAS members. They should be off to reclaim the “Unicorn” …””’

The vague explanation showed that Riddhe had not decided what to do. Without prompting further, Nigel merely looked towards the “Magallanica” along with Daryl’s unit. The three units remained together, drifting in space, unable to make any decision.

Part 23[edit]

Banagher left the massive mobile suit tunnel, and moved towards the industrial block, only to feel something hooking onto his shoulder. He heard an explosion afar, and the strings lost taut as they danced like live creatures before him.

He realized it was a trap, but was unable to react in time, a flash and boom exploded from the hatch, the howling hot winds stuffing his nose. He immediately curled up, held his breath, and was sent flying into the industrial block with the shrapnel and the explosion. Sharp shrapnel grazed him like bullets, cutting the shoulder of his pilot suit. He was

sent spinning by the impact, and the tilting crane mast was shown in his sight.

His temples were throbbing, telling him to relax, but he could not. His body had formed a hard ball as it bounced off the mast, the sharp pain from the shoulders and back left him breathless. As he let out a silent scream, he instinctively kicked off the mast, getting himself to move since he was a target. He moved down the floor, evaded the half-wrecked mini mobile suit. The explosions did not cease as booming noises echoed through the large sealed space.

Banagher sought for Frontal's presence as he passed many junctures, and suddenly entered the industrial block. It was a different path from what he took; the "Unicorn" was about 1km away, right before the mass driver. There was no way he could win if the "Sinanju" showed up, so he had to find a way back to the "Unicorn", but where was Frontal hiding? Banagher realized he was trapped as he scanned the forest of debris that had turned into rubbish. Something seemed to drift through the layers of metal frames, and Banagher instinctively squeezed the trigger.

The sparks bounced by the frames, the scorching air whizzing by his helmet. He fell back as though he was tugged behind. His back hit the floor, and the recoil caused him to float. He flailed around, wanting to reposition himself, and a second bullet grazed his flank, shattering the canopy of the little mobile suit. He barely managed to kick off its arm when a third bullet bounced off the metallic wall, pursuing him.

"It's a strange feeling."

Frontal's voice muzzled the echo of the gun, ringing through the forest of debris. Banagher hid behind a container carrier, anxious that he could not determine the enemy's position. He was faltering in fear, and it was this, rather than the voice echoing everywhere, that rendered him unable to detect the killing intent. Banagher was so terrified, so disheartened that his body lost the armor called the "Unicorn".

"I have a feeling I once thought the same. Even as a Newtype, I needed to train my body of flesh and blood to fight. I lured out a "Gundam" pilot, and had a physical showdown against him "

"How long are you going to imitate others!?"

Banagher cut him off, firing the girl. A red shadow was at the foot of another crane. The helmet ornament flickered; there was no time to aim, and the bullet fired instinctively caused sparks to fly from a cargo crate.

“You’re not Char. You’re just a puppet made to imitate him!”

That should be the case, or so Banagher told himself as he leapt off the floor, from behind the carrier. A heavy rumbling echoed in the industrial block, and the crane conveyor belt moved.

The pressing machine and shredder too rang, along with the beam burner, which started to melt the goods upon the conveyor belt. Heat waves were spread in the forest of debris, turning it into a furnace. It appeared Frontal had switched on the powe, and the industrial block was back to being active. Banagher was rattled by the tremors before him, his dazed body just drifting defenselessly. The beam burner continued to cut through material, the hydraulic drives of the pressing machines gnawing debris, the rhythmic robotic noises continued to echo. At the same time, a certain red pilot suit appeared in the shadow of the conveyor belt.—

Sparks appeared from his gun, a delayed shot rang together with the flood-like machinery noises. Banagher turned around in an instant, but the bullet grazed his left arm, cutting through his pilot suit and the skin beneath.

He felt he was struck by a hot poker while flying several meters away. He pressed down upon his numb upper arm, and hid behind the pillar of the conveyor belt, the damp sensation seeping through his glove, blood oozing from the tear in the pilot suit. First, he would have to stop the bleeding, and to mend the clothes. Banagher recalled the steps he learned at Anaheim Technical Institute, pulled the spray from his vest to stop the bleeding, and a scorching pain spread throughout his body.

“You should know the meaning of the term residual thoughts”

Frontal’s voice echoed with the incessant machine noises. Banagher gritted his teeth, spraying at his wound as he experienced the disgust of blood instantly clotting.

“The psycoframe has an element of reacting to humanity’s will, and also to absorb it. The psycoframe has the power to move an asteroid, and the price is that the will of the human acting as its core shall be burned up.”

Frontal too should have been gravely wounded, but his voice remained poised. Banagher listened to the distant voice as he mended his pilot suit with duct tape. With this, he should be able to maintain air tightness in vacuum he would have to endure the pain for the time being.

“If that person’s consciousness continues to wander space, with

nowhere to return to…it will not be strange for him to occasionally reside in the appearance of a god. As you said, humans are creatures seeking themselves in others."

The sneer did not stop as the red profile glided past his vision. "Enough with these illogical words…!" Banagher yelled as he fired the gun. He gave pursuit at the profile behind the crane, and kicked off the conveyor belt. Using the debris of the drifting mini mobile suits as launch pads, he ducked behind the pillow. At that moment, he sensed pressure from above, and found his vision blanketed by Frontal's pilot suit.

The gun pointed up was kicked aside, sent flying into the end. Banagher was choked by an extended arm, his back slammed into the crane arm. The impact from two masses and inertia clashed, thirty or so pipes bundled upon the floating crane scattered in the air, flying around, landing on the mast and making a crisp sound.

The fingers stabbing into the throat caused these noises and scenes to seem so distant. Frontal's face could not be seen due to the tinted visor of the helmet. Banagher's consciousness was fading while he was being choked by a faceless pilot suit, only to spot a pipe next to him. He reached out his hand that was half numb, grabbed it, and found it was just large enough to grip. Before Frontal could stop him, a blunt impact could be heard from the heavily swung pipe. Frontal took a direct hit on the helmet, and bounced aside.

Banagher continued to cough as he curled his upper body up, throwing the pipe at the still stumbling Frontal. He saw many more pipes, grabbed them, and threw them at Frontal like spears. The latter swayed and ducked, raising his handgun, which luckily was hit by a pipe. The red pilot suit clicked its tongue, and retreated. Banagher continued to throw pipes, but he clearly underestimated the latter's physical ability.

Frontal grabbed a thrown pipe, clicked himself off a crane, and quickly closed in. The pipe exceeding a meter in length came flying in like a rapier, and the tip grazed Banagher's face. The latter evaded the stab in the nick of time, swinging the pole in his hand horizontally. After another 2, 3 clashes, both of them were drifting, and Banagher suddenly fell backwards as his foot caught something.

He landed back-first onto something hard and sturdy, the tremors he felt starting to move aside. Before he could wonder if he was tripped by the conveyor belt, Frontal's pipe flashed by, and as he could not block it, he was swept aside. Frontal then seized the opportunity to close in, landing onto the materials, pinning the pipe tip onto Banagher's throat.

The latter saw him covered in orange light, and looked behind in surprise.

There was a beam rifle-like light at the end of the belt standing vertically. The materials would be melted apart, and reclaimed by another arm, before being transported elsewhere. Banagher and Frontal were on a square deck 3 meters wide, which was slowly approaching the blade of the beam burner.

They were doomed if they touched it. The heat and light that could instantly vaporize upon contact got increasingly intense. Banagher wanted to escape immediately, but if he were to move, the pipe would surely smash his head along with the helmet. With his back pinned onto the materials, Banagher glared at the red pilot suit standing before him. The latter seemed to show no fear at the beam closing in, staring back at Banagher through the dark colored visor.

“Your confusion and fear have reached me.”

The light of the beamburner touched the materials before him, becoming bright and shining upon Frontal’s visored face. Banagher saw a cold stare from the masked right eye, an obvious eyeball beneath the cracked mask, somewhat covered with blood as it floated beneath the visor like a ghost, leaving him intimidated.

“You are like me. The moment you decided to inherit your father’s will, the possibilities in your heart began to die.”

“What…”

“Your mind has stilled because you set boundaries for yourself, and you are bound as you bear responsibilities…these will kill the emotions of a young fledgling Newtype. The desire to leave possibilities abound will kill possibilities.”

The pipe pinning down on the throat was slightly lifted, and the bloodied face under the mask smirked. Banagher did not know if he was a puppet, or just the ghost of Char living in the pupper; he was sure however that the man was mad. The beam burner heat was within inches, and Banagher clenched with all his might, holding his breath as he kicked his feet out.

Banagher did not stand, and instead let his body move down the belt. He saw Frontal reel, closed his eyes, and flattened himself. There was approximately a 2m gap between the railings. He assumed he would not be burned if he ducked through, so he pulled his visor down, and gritted his teeth. The heat waves reached through the visor, and for a few milliseconds , he felt his body burning all over. The sound of steel

being melted ran up close, causing his mind to numb, and then he was thrown out of the belt.

He evaded the looming arm that was going to pick materials, flailing his limbs with all his might. Once he realized his senses were fine, Banagher opened his eyes and looked around. He lost his bearings, let alone Frontal. Which path would lead him to the mass driver where the "Unicorn" awaited? He looked around, landed on the ground, opened the visor to wipe his sweat, and caught his breath.

"You shall become like your father, bound by the curse he and others have laid upon you."

Frontal's voice cast aside that moment of respite, echoing through the wreckage. Banagher determined the voice came from behind, and went towards the collapse crane. Frontal had no weapon. Perhaps Banagher could return to the "Unicorn" if he knew where to go.

"You can no longer determine where I am now."

The sneer clearly came from behind. *No, he's the one who doesn't know where I am. Since he aged, he lost his instincts, his possibilities.'' "No…!" Banagher refuted, turned around the pile of wreckage, only for a sudden black hole to cut his exit.*

It was a beam rifle muzzle, and Banagher was too late to understand it. It was a thick caliber the size of folded arms, lifting Banagher like a needle lifting a worm. The multi-layered armor rubbed, making metallic sounds, and the "Sinanju" hidden amongst the debris lifted his head. Half its body was burned, everything beyond the left elbow was gone, but it meant nothing to Banagher, who was mere flesh and body. The latter was tossed into the air, unable to resist, his body at gunpoint.

"It is a pity to kill you…but I will have to."

Frontal was in the opened belly cockpit, saying that on the linear seat. Banagher never heard the rumbles due to the surrounding noise. *Did he start the generator for this purpose…Banagher realized too late as he looked around, trying to find an opportunity to escape. The massive body of the "Sinanju" rumbled, and Banagher looked towards the muzzle that would neutralize anything in its path.*

"You are bound by the organization of the Oldtypes…the concepts of duty and responsibilities. Newtypes have their way to communicate with the world, but I suppose you will not listen?"

The "Sinanju" mooneye looked like an eyeball, giving a pitiful look to a worm in its palm. The troublesome thing called responsibility bound

humanity down, robbing them of what they should say, and sometimes a necessary evil—this reaction throbbed in his heart, and he felt his face cringe.

“We shall give those who do not wish to change, a future that will not change. I will use the “Box” for this. This is just desserts for those who denied Newtypes.”

Just desserts,’’ Banagher finally sensed some emotion from the human called Frontal, and he lifted his head, as though woken from a dream.

Frontal was in the cockpit, shielded by the dark visor, looking like a faceless ghoul that was his true appearance. Beyond the shed mask was nothing. He was vengeful about his own emptiness, which caused him to hate the world, to mimic the experiences and words of others to disguise himself. He was merely a rotting body who had Char’s mask, a grudge venting his emotions everywhere.

“…You’re no Newtype.”

Banagher merely felt malice, and words borne out of malice were not worth listening. He glared at the face that did not exist, and clearly denied him.

“You don’t have anything, you can’t do anything. All you can do is to mock, to look down on others. You’re just a remnant, a gutless puppet taking the appearance of Char.”

The faceless ghoul throbbed, and the mooneye of the “Sinanju” shook, twitching as it took the rage and fear. A beam would be fired at the next moment, erasing Banagher without a trace. Banagher neither willed himself, nor did he regret as he clenched his fists, convinced these were the words he should say. However, Frontal’s attention was directed to the side, the beam rifle pointing above.

Banagher sensed the sky being ripped through behind him, and a trail of white smoke extended towards the “Sinanju”. It was too late for the red machine to duck, the trail stabbing into the flank like a sharp spear, the noise and flash from the explosion erasing all of Banagher’s senses.

The ”Sinanju” stumbled, closed the cockpit hatch, and flew back. Banagher was blown away by the thrusters, and he grabbed a crane debris, spotting another rocket trail strike the “Sinanju”. A massive fireball appeared on the “Sinanju” flank, tearing into the cables surrounding it. A blinding light shone upon the forest of wreckage, and another person came in from the other end, appearing in Banagher’s sights.

“Master Banagher!”

The moment their eyes met, the man wielding the recoilless bazooka yelled. They were more than 50 meters apart, but his voice reached Banagher. The moss green suit was clearly ECOAS equipment. “Mr Gael…!?” Banagher responded, looking at the person leaping through the wreckage. Gael nimbly piloted the thrusters on his back as he navigated through the gaps. It appeared he was already used to fighting. The “Sinanju” continued to flail its rifle about when a third rocket was fired. The red giant took a direct hit in the chest, causing it to topple.

The missile was like a bean to the mobile suit, but it landed well, and might have caused major harm. The “Sinanju” took a third direct hit, its scorched body flying in the air. The thrusters capable of lifting 30 tonnes struck at the wind, causing the surrounding debris to rattle. Gael then moved his thruster strough the swirling headwind, flying above Banagher’s head like a ferocious raptor.

“Get to the “Unicorn” quickly! I’ll fend him off!”

He yelled the moment they passed, and the bazooka reticule was aimed at the”Sinanju”. Through the burned spacesuit, Banagher could see that Gael was injured, but Banagher continued to kick off the debris, leaving them, and flew straight through. Once they got through, his line of sight would wide. He would have to find a path to the mass driver, and board the “Unicorn”, or so he thought as he wanted to scale the crane mast. The loudest boom thus far caused the many layers of debris to rumble.

The”Sinanju” evaded the missile, kicked aside the debris pile, and landed next to it. Its mooneye looked towards Banagher who was scaling the mast, and looked forward. Frontal’s malice resonated with the mooneye, and Banagher sensed his heart being gripped.

It’s your turn to experience deja vu—the “Sinanju” mooneye seemed to imply as it reeled in the lens, raising the rifle. Banagher could neither stop Frontal nor call Gael’s name. The rifle let out a flash, instantly scorching the debris forest before him.

The wreckage of the mini mobile suit and the transport carrier blew like toys, the flashes and noise of the explosions filled the entire industrial block. Banagher saw a little profile flying through the rubble, ostensibly Gael’s, swallowed in the torrential winds. It instantly lost its limbs, its charred body vanishing in the light.

He’s gone, like Mr Daguza. Not dead, gone. He could not muster any

feelings, no sadness. A person that once existed was gone

“‘Unicorn”!”

Banagher’s head seared as he eked out these words. At that moment, he had a vision of being a kilometer away. The “Unicorn” lifted its horn, the eyes deep beyond the visor glowing.

The psycommu’s reception was maximized, and the machine stood up. The “Unicorn” thrusters blared at full power as it charged forward towards the industrial block. The repercussions rocking his mind vibrated through his five senses, rumbling through the air of the industrial block, and Banagher heard the white giant fly through the tunnel.

The psycoframe glowed massively, the wind pressure oozing through the gaps of the armor, scattering all the debris afar, and the one armed “Sinanju” to shake. Banagher kicked the mast of the crane, and flew towards the source of the light. The “Unicorn” cockpit opened, the horn on its head splitting apart, the psycoframe was revealed, shining redder than the furnace.

Part 24[edit]

The pressure released from within the “Magallanica” passed through countless walls and decks, forming ripples in the vacuum, which then passed through the “Banshee” cockpit like a wind. Ridhde heard of a familiar ‘voice’.

“Banagher……!?”

Everyone, lend me strength. Frontal’s a darkness that will devour the ‘light’. We can’t let him leave.”

Those who heard the ‘voice’ felt their hearts race; it faded before they grasped it. *“You heard that?” “Was it that brat…!?”” Daryl and Nigel called out, and Riddhe ignored them as he looked towards the ‘voice’. It came from deep within the revolving residential block of the “Magallanica”…but it did not stop there. Riddhe could sense a tremendous pressure arising from the snail shell, moving fast within its rings. He focused his attention on the waves that kept changing positions, and spotted the mass driver protruding at the tip of the shell. The next moment, there was an explosion at the base, the frame severed, and two lights crossed as they flew into the vacuum.*

“The ‘Unicorn Gundam’……!”

The white mobile suit was exuding a red phosphorus glow, firing the Gatling guns equipped within its shield. The bright red humanoid

machine, which had lost an arm, evaded using its thrusters. Riddhe knew it was the ”Sinanju”, but only that. The two machines clashed blades at high speed, parrying each other as they dragged trails of light, flying towards the bow of the “Magallanica”.

“it’s fast…!”

They could not provide covering fire in time—or at the least, entertain such a thought. The two lights clashed over and over again. Riddhe reflected upon the ‘voice’ he heard, about the darkness devouring the light as he stood rooted, watching them go. He was blocked by the “Jesta *before him, which had its beam rifle primed.* “Riddhe, lead us.”” Nigel said, and Riddhe’s heart was pounding wildly before he could respond, and looked towards Nigel’s ”Jesta”.

‘‘You can hear the “Unicorn” voice better than us”.’’

“We don’t like it, but you’re piloting the “Banshee”. We’ll listen to your orders.””

Daryl too positioned his “Jesta *diagonally behind the “Banshee”. Riddhe saw the two damaged units, and determined they were fine to continue, looking back towards the battlefield. He did hear Banagher’s ‘voice’. Was it the psycommu resonance or the Newtype senses… there was lots of logic, lots of deduction, but these did not matter. He was always working hard, and the voice came. As a human, he was battling for humanity’s existence, and was pleading as a fellow human, and valued Riddhe as a man.*

Shall I respond—or I should ask, can I?’’ Riddhe was unable to respond immediately as he reeled his hand on the joystick. “Riddhe, what’s wrong?”” Nigel’s anxious voice rang, and the clashing lights formed larger fireballs.

Part 25[edit]

The last mega particle was fired from the beam Gatling, and he slid the gun back along with the shield. Once Banagher discarded the gun, the psycoframe in the shield formed an ‘X’, changing trajectory as though it had its own consciousness.

The beams were deflected by the I-field generator, and the “Unicorn Gundam” went towards the”Sinanju” feet. Banagher followed through by letting the”Unicorn Gundam” slip into the “Sinanju” blind spot. There were only two rounds of beam Gatling left, and he could not waste them. Banagher’s eyes were synchronized with the main camera, and the moment the shield was on the same plane as the “Sinanju”, he squeezed the trigger of his beam .

The mega particles loaded in the cartridge were fired, and a large beam was released from the muzzle. The energy block was the equivalent to four times an ordinary rifle. It hit the inside of the shield, shattering it, and continued to fly towards the “Sinanju”. The wings on the red machine blasted its thrusters, and it instantly blended into the darkness of the vacuum, firing mega particles at the”Unicorn Gundam” from the side.

“Impressive. You are truly a powerful Newtype.””’

Frontal cackled, decreased the output, and shot in rapid fire. His thrusters were quite damaged, but the mobility did not decrease. The “Sinanju” lost an arm, and was lighter as a result as it raced sideways. The beams were fired upon the ”Unicorn Gundam” in all directions.

“But no matter how powerful your light is, it cannot fill the entire world. What you will do next will one day be buried in the darkness of the history too.””’

The beam grazed the armor, shaking the cockpit. Banagher had no scattershot weapon, and could only charge in for melee combat. However, the “Sinanju” did not allow for any opportunity. Banagher gritted his teeth “I can’t take revenge for Mr Gael…!” The psycoframe gave a bloody red glow…and the roar of a beast came from beneath his feet. The cockpit was dyed in an offensive mode color, and the eyes of the “Unicorn Gundam” twitched, expanding to the maximum.

The “Unicorn Gundam” pursued the “Sinanju”, the blades of the beam tonfas bursting from his elbows. He must not overthink it. He had to let his impulse drive him, or else he could not catch up to the man who was severed from the world. Banagher held his breath as he focused his concentration on the burning core in his belly. *Let it all out, all the desire to hurt, to kill, burn myself to ashes. I don’t care what happens as long as I can burn Frontal completely—*

No, I told you that, right? Banagher.”

A warmth completely different descended upon the shoulders, and a familiar ‘voice’ echoed in the helmet “Miss Marida…” Banagher froze and muttered, and then he heard other thoughts pass through his consciousness.

Don’t fight just on hatred. Both sides will fall.”

You’re being too tense. Look around a little more.””’

The ‘voice’ contained Daguze’s sternness and Gilboa’s kindness, forming a gale that blew through his heated mind. It was not an

illusion, but lingering thoughts…the familiar consciousness residing in this ”Unicorn Gundam” were speaking to him. He saw phosphorus lights of blue, green and yellow swimming in the cockpit, and doubted his mental state as he listened upon the ‘voice’ swirling with the light. It clearly reached him, and he could see them etched upon the afterimages of the psycoframe, along with the beast of possibilities, the silhouettes of life.

Look closely Banagher. That man is the lonely one. He has nobody supporting.”

One of the colors took the form of Cardeas’ consciousness, which stood next to Banagher, pointing forward. Banagher stared at the burned life remains within the “Sinanju”. It no longer resonated with humanity, was like an aged star giving its last lasts. If he could have taught his worshippers like Angelo, he could have made his light everlasting.

This is the fate of those who don’t believe in others. I used to be the same. But you are different. You are willing to believe in human hearts, to connect to many.”

“In that case…! In that case, I shall lend my body to everyone. Use me and the “Unicorn”!”

This is fine.” Banagher thought. He felt his physical body, his half-hearted ‘ego’, was preventing him from resonating with the many other ‘voices’. If he could abandon himself and become one with the”Unicorn Gundam”—

No. You will lose your humanity.”

Loni’s reproach came. Many other colors swirled, and Banagher saw a rainbow glow from the psycoframe.

If you become a vessel, you will be just like him.”

Resonate without abandoning yourself.”

You’re not alone. You have the power to bring out the potential in others and absorb them into yourself. This is your strength.”

I said the lion’s waiting too, right?”

The ‘voices’ of Gael, Marida and Cardeas were joined by Syam’s heaviness, and a beam glided through space, agitating Banagher’s eyes. The “Sinanju” barely evaded by inches, and another two beams were shot from different directions. *“Banagher!”” The voice was reality, a human voice resonated with his heart a black lion with an intertwined*

fate was roaring.

“Mr Riddhe…!?”

The light in reality reflected his blinking eyes, and he spotted the “Banshee” approaching from behind. *“Behind you, hurry!”” another voice came through the wireless, and Banagher instinctively flew up. The “Sinanju” beam grazed the feet, passing by the two”Jesta” tailing them.*

“The Tri-Stars…!”

The two”Jesta” scattered nimbly, dragging their thrusters as they fired at the ”Sinanju” diagonally. The “Banshee” anticipated where the”Sinanju” would evade, and swung the beam saber down. Banagher saw the golden glow through its armor, along with some rainbow phosphorus light. He instinctively approached the “Banshee”, and the rainbow glows of the two units touched and expanded exponentially. The “Banshee” extended its limbs, becoming the “Gundam”.

The two psycoframes lost their original colors, their lights blaring everywhere, synchronizing with the expanded psycofield. It was no afterimage, but a present ‘air’. Banagher and Riddhe shared this ‘air’ as they leapt off the same path. The two units dragging trails of phosphorus light flanked the “Sinanju” above and below. The light field surrounded the one armed “Sinanju”, which tried to break free from the field, but was unable to do as planned, giving off a weak light. The beam rifle fired mega particles at random directions.

‘The two ‘Gundam’s oppose me now…!?””’

There was a panicked voice from within the “Sinanju” for the first time. Banagher pulled out the beam tonfa and slashed at the passing red unit. The psycoframe exploded with a light rejecting resonance, and the slowed “Sinanju” barely evaded this attack. “Riddhe!” he called out, and the “Banshee” that had got behind pulled out the beam tonfas on its arms, slicing the “Sinanju” into two.

The “Sinanju *abandoned the beam rifle that was reduced to a fireball, drew the beam saber from its sleeve, and lit it. It exhibited a seemingly instantaneous ability to accelerate as it got behind the “Banshee”, raising its beam saber. Banagher instinctively reached his hand out, wanting to grab the one armed shadow. The right hand of the “Unicorn Gundam” was raised, radiating pulses from its psycommu ports. An invisible power crashed upon the”Sinanju”. The machine surrounded by light was seemingly bound down, unable to move.*

‘An intrusion of lingering thoughts…!? Against me who’s the vessel of humanity’s collective will…!”’

“You are twisted as a vessel!”

“Prepare yourself! Full Frontal!””

Riddhe yelled as he raised the beam rifle. Banagher too pulled the beam rifle in the back from its mount. The two rifles were aimed at the “Sinanju”, fired the last of their Magnum and Gatlings down straight trajectories, forming a massive torrent, devouring the “Sinanju” in the spiral of light.

“What nonsense…!”’

The”Sinanju” cut past the scorching torrent of energy, and got up despite its legs being torn apart. The melted wings on its back moved the unit that had lost its humanoid form, but it was no longer giving off light. A black mist-like shadow was rumbling, nudging forth the machine that had lost its humanoid form. The darkness devouring the light was expanding from the “Sinanju”, and Banagher had a hallucination of the emptiness leading to the abyss of the universe.

‘What can this ‘light’ do? If it can’t reach out of the solar system, it is just a moment. No matter how many you gather ”’

That’s why we have to keep connecting.

Until one day, this ‘light’ covers the entire world.’’

Only by passing this time capsule of life will all sentient being gain eternity.’’

A man who only looks at himself will never understand.’’

The “Unicorn Gundam” moved forward, nudged on by many ‘voices’. *“Again with this nonsense…!”” The darkness yelled as it released its last ounce of energy, its shadow surrounding the “Unicorn Gundam”. Banagher tossed the rifle aside, released its beam tonfas, and struck at the “Sinanju”. The machine’s psycoframe flew based on thought, and heated up, instantly vaporizing the surrounding darkness. The beam blades exuded from its arms then stabbed into the “Sinanju” body.*

The “Sinanju” was stabbed through with two beam blades, and it quivered, lifting its head in apparent agony. Banagher felt that he had stabbed through the core, and went with the flow as he drifted in the field between light and darkness. *“I really want to praise you, but this is not right, young Banagher.”” Upon hearing Frontal’s voice, Banagher*

widened his eyes in surprise.

“You will know immediately what it means to achieve ultimate sense… the price of becoming a true Newtype. You will be swallowed by that machine, you will lose the vessel to pass your genes down as Banagher Links.””’

Each and every word was like an ice needle, and Banagher felt his heart freeze, “What are…you saying—”Banagher was speechless, *“The ultimate Newtype is complete.””’ Frontal interrupted with a curse.*

“I told you, no? You can no longer return to everyone.””’

The dark mouth broke apart, and the monster’s shadow leered away. Such is the reality—the destination borne out of knowledge, and evolved for knowledge. Banagher shook aside the unconditional instinct to agree, and invoked his thoughts into the “Unicorn Gundam”.

“The Dead shall return to the darkness!”

A blinding flash was unleashed from the arms of the “Unicorn Gundam”, expanding the beam blades stabbed into the “Sinanju”, ignoring the compactor’s limit as the beams extended hundreds of meters. The blades melted the base grips, and the “Sinanju” exploded, the shrapnel drifting in space. The monster’s shadow slowly lost its form, a crack resembling a smile expanded, causing it to blend into the cluster of stars.

The “Unicorn” purged a burned grip, and the mount of the beam tonfa was retracted back, the rainbow light filling the cockpit slowly fading. Banagher exhaled as he sank into the linear seat, his shoulders huffing as he panted, his eyes looking at his tense palms. He did not lose his body. His arms were still in pain from the attacks; his bones were numb due to the G forces. He affirmed the feelings in his palms, yet he could not shake away the uneasiness in his heart. Through the monitor, he looked towards the “Magallanica” approximately 50km away.

The light of the psycofield slowly faded, and the shape of a snail the size of a thumb was left, clearly drifting in space. He could not see the accompanying “Nahel Argama *at this distance. Did Audrey reach the commsblock safely? The uneasiness gradually rose in his consciousness, and the unknown took the form of a chill, reaching throughout his fingertips. Frontal was no longer present, and the ghost spreading malice was gone…but where exactly did this freezing air come from? Banagher looked around, sensing it was not just the*

curse. “You alright Banagher?”” He heard Riddhe’s voice.

“If you can move, get out of here now. The colony laser is aiming at the “Magallanica”.””

“Colony…laser……?”

Banagher never heard of this combination of words, but he felt the malice in those words, and looked towards the “Banshee” approaching from below. The black machine maintained the form of the “Gundam” as it blared its burners. Riddhe’s anxious voice rang anxiously.

‘“Once fired, everything in this space will be destroyed. ECOAS should be off looking for Mineva. Return with us to the ”Nahel Argama”.””

The “Banshee” mane like horn flickered, and the Tri-Stars’ ”Jestas” followed with their burners blared, as though awaiting Banagher to follow. Banagher looked at the “Magallanica” behind them, and then at Earth that was the size of a fist. He understood the meaning behind this thing called the colony laser—the heavy cold air lingering in this space. The source of that cold air was in the direction of that blue planet. The unparalleled power could erase everything, and was aimed at the “Magallanica”. The pure energy lump, capable of rivalling the sun, was rumbling away. There was no way to escape, the massive body of the “Magallanica” would not be able to escape in time. If they did not hurry and retreat, they too would—

“But in that case, the “Laplace Box”…the manner to convey truth to the world…”

Everything would be lost. Everything they had lost, all the thoughts of the involved, the ‘light’ of possibilities. What would they do? So Banagher asked himself as he looked at his palm. At the same time, he got one answer that caused his shoulders to shudder massively.

You can no longer return to ‘everyone’—that was what he meant. The man expected everything, and left behind a curse. Everything that would happen thereafter seeped through his body as an electric current, and he clenched his fists. He crushed Frontal’s mockery of him, and lifted his face. There were traces of the rainbow ‘light’ amongst the stars. All the lights allowed him to take shape as a human, the unique ‘lights’ waited with bated breaths in this cold air.

“Banagher, what’s wrong!? Answer me!””

One of the ‘lights’ called out. Banagher waved aside the outstretched hand of the “Banshee”, and had the “Unicorn Gundam” move forward. The machine felt the will as it blared its burners, accelerating towards

the “Magallanica”. The glow of the psycoframe might have increased, forming a phosphorus light akin to the arm of the Milky Way.

Part 26[edit]

“‘…This is what they mean by those of the same kind understand each other, best right? Two powerful figures secretly supporting the government have vanished in unison. Even the folks living on the other side of the Moon may hear some unpleasant rumors.”’

The man gleefully stating so on the screen was almost 45 years old, but his skin remained taut, and his lush hair showed no signs of fading. He was a third generation senator who gained popularity through his looks, and thus maintaining his appearance was a facet he had to work hard on. Ronan however suspected that might not be all, for the man seemed to live a little too hedonistically for his age. The man looked younger because of his lifestyle, to live for himself and not to care about the struggles in his heart.

He was not being boastful; he simply felt there was nothing in this world for him to take seriously, that every person in his path was a mere rock in his path. He would be no politician if he took all humans as humans, but he was way overboard in this regard. It appeared Martha had the same thought as she answered, “It is impressive that you have such a reliable intelligence network, Defense Minister Monaghan Bakharov.” She sounded utterly displeased. They were in the ‘Caucasus Forest’, and Monaghan Bakharov was on a monitor next to the colony laser, smiling away. Bright, who lifted his head unhappily, appeared peeved from the side.

“But is this fine? The “Sleeves” are doomed. You should worry about how to deal with yourself, rather than talk with us, I suppose?”

“It is strange to hear such words from you. The radical ‘Wind NGO’ that had supported Neo Zeon has nothing to do with me. I intend to punish all involved parties severely, and shall relay all information about the “Sleeves” to the Federation…but there are some things I am curious about.”’

Saying that, Monaghan reached for the lush hair unbefitting his age, and showed a sly glint in his eyes. He somehow obtained intel that the colony laser was about to be fired, interrupted the comms of the control room, and demanded to speak with the two ‘secret rulers’. This showed that he, a senator of the Republic of Zeon, knew everything, and discreetly admitted to being the mastermind behind the “Sleeves”. He finally showed his true colors. Along with a frowning Martha, Rona looked towards the footage transmitted from side 3. The comms

operators were busy aligning the “Gryphios 2”, and Bright, surrounded by guards, stared at the monitor.

‘“After Neo Zeon’s destruction was announced, one has to wonder what the Federation’s Space Military Realignment will entail…The Republic and the factories of Anaheim on the Moon have some contact, so naturally, we cannot remain callous about this.”’

Monaghan continued, sounding unperturbed as he ignored all the stares. His intel might have come from a Settlement Issues council member, probably afraid that the Realignment will fail…probably John Powell. Before Martha could glance aside to reproach Ronan, the latter merely sighed in annoyance.

“Our Republic government is too troubled by these terrorists using the name of Zeon. The fact remains however that the Federation and the economy can run because of people like the “Sleeves”.”’

“What are you getting at?”

‘“The baby boom after the war has resulted in the population of the Earth Celestial Sphere to expand to 12 billion. It is impossible to ensure employment for everyone. Humanity’s wish is to eradicate war, but keeping unemployment and poverty levels down is the responsibility of the government, am I correct?”’

“Are you saying that the Republic has to continue being the enemy so that the Federation Realignment succeeds?”

“A war between countries will not do. The incomes are imbalanced.”’

One simply has to look at the Principality of Zeon’’, Monaghan shrugged as he hinted at that. The failure to retrieve the “Laplace Box” was one thing, but the destruction of the Neo Zeon fleet in the process was surely unexpected to him. However, he was not defeated, and came to negotiate immediately. Was it because he understood that there was no unchanging thing in this world, having been on the side of defeat? Or did he never think of them as people to begin with, and was so brazen to attempt this? It was likely the latter, so Ronan thought as he glared at the gleeful face.

‘*“It is best to leave them to dangerous elements like Neo Zeon. Most have been dealt with after the war, but our government has had some relation with the Oldtypes. If needed, we can reorganize the “Sleeves” again.”’*

Bright was utterly furious by the blatant words as he took a step forward, only to be ushered back at gunpoint. Martha ignored Bright,

“And I suppose the price is to delay the dissolution of the Republic?” Monaghan did not answer, instead merely showing a smile only in appearance.

“It does sound decent to the Federation and Anaheim, but is that really possible? That Second Coming of Char might have been shot down in battle, you know?”

“We can make as many as we want. It is merely a symbol after all, like the Federation’s “Gundam”. Give an appearance, and the public will determine its own meaning.””’

Even Martha gasped at this as she reeled her chin. So, was this the truth behind Full Frontal—the Second Coming of Char who symbolized the reborn Neo Zeon? Ronan already anticipated how furious he would be, and once he sensed he was at his limit, the heat was at his throat, “Enough already.” He interrupted sternly.

“It seems you are playing with fire, Minister Monaghan. Any continued negotiations will reduce your lifespan. Your father rebuilt the Republic of Zeon after the war, and he will be disappointed by you.”

A crack appeared on the calm face, and Monaghan’s eyes were seething. Ronan sensed that he was correct in his assessment, that Monaghan Bakharov disagreed with the policy to abide by the Federation after the war, approached Neo Zeon that had declared itself independent from the Republic, and unwittingly learned to manipulate them. He was right in desiring the independence of the Republic, but all he knew was to enjoy the fruits of others’ efforts, compared to the suffering his father’s generation endured when they were forced to submit. This man was arrogant to think of the world as his toy. *“You…are rather blunt here!”’ Monaghan attempted to regain some pride, “We’re busy, unlike you.” Ronan in turn cut him off.*

“Depending on your answer, minister, we may end up a little busier. Do remember that the colony laser may have more than one shot.”

If you intend to intimidate us, I shall burn Side 3’s capital ‘Zum City’.” Martha and Bright were startled by this unexpected implication as they turned towards Ronan in shock. “This…is…”’ While Monaghan continued on with a pale face, “It will happen.” Ronan answered decisively.

“The target is currently moving, and we’re busy correcting the course. It will be an unfortunate accident if the shot passes through Side 3.”

It was not that easy to hit a colony behind the Moon, but they could aim at it if needed. Ronan was not saying this just to intimidate, and he

stared at the monitor unflinchingly. Monaghan's tense face twitched, and he averted his eyes with a grimace. *"…I see, the destruction of the "Box" means that the economy of old has to change.""' The reaction just reeked of sour grapes as it bounced off the wall, and vanished above the operators' heads..*

"I shall witness the future of the Federation after Zeon is destroyed, from the back of the moon.""'

Monaghan finished the insult he barely thought of, and disconnected. A second after the monitor was disconnected, there was a relative CG depicting "Gryphios 2" with its target. Monaghan's presence never lingered in their hearts, and the mood reverted back as though nothing happened. The puppeteer of the Republic had completely vanished from the 'Caucasus Forest'.

The operators stared at their terminals, not looking up. It was a fact that everyone was busy aligning the target on the reticule, calculating the trajectory. They were so busy, and a man just took up an entire monitor. They were so furious that they did not listen to the conversation. Ronan sighed as he looked towards Martha and Bright, who were facing reality. "The alignment is almost complete." He said with a terse voice..

"It will take about 20 minutes to rechard, considering the "Magallanica" mobility, extra firepower and range."

"That's too much time."

"We can't shorten it anymore. This is the first time we're aiming at a moving target."

Aibres' face had been tense for hours, and his golf tanned face was clearly showing fatigue. Ronan looked back at the monitor, and up towards the "Gryphios 2" that was being corrected. The flashing lights were probably the nuclear rockets being used to redirect. They might appear as small as needles, by the side of the cylinder, but up close, they were probably several hundred meters in length. It was said the laser cannon the size of a colony required the thrust output of an entire space fleet..

It would pass the shoal space region, Earth, and the total distance would be 795,000 kilometers. A slight deviation in angle of the "Gryphios 2" would result in an error of several hundred meters. If the laser missed by 0.01 degree, it could burn everything in its path. This "Gryphios 2" was derived from the 'solar ray' of the Principality of Zeon, its decisive weapon. *I never expected myself to be firing the*

most destructive weapon in human history'' Ronan's lips curled as he stared at the 6km diameter of "Gryphios 2" emitting a dangerous light. "Contract's renewed" Martha's voice came from behind.

"Since it left "Industrial 7", that makes it perfect for us. We can work together to destroy the "Box", and that will establish a new working relationship between the Federation and the Vist Foundation."

Or rather, accomplices. Martha gave a stiff smile as she looked towards the monitor by the side, where the "Magallanica" was on. The clock on it was shown to be 1pm. Ronan did not look at anyone, and instead waited for the time. Bright remained surrounded by guns, his eyes still unflinching as he glared at Ronan's back.

Part 27[edit]

"Colony laser…!?"

The voice inadvertently leaked out, bouncing off the tall ceiling. Mineva went limp as she drifted in zero gravity. *"This intel is correct.""' She heard Zimmerman's voice.*

'""Ensign Riddhe informed us of it. ECOAS is currently headed towards you. Please evacuate from there immediately. The "Magallanica" will definitely be hit given its size.""'

The voice over the wireless was extremely clear. There was a powerful comms facility at the bow of the "Magallanica", next to the command block, capable of broadcasting to the entire Earth Celestial Sphere. Codes had been inputted into the various satellites, and signals were starting to show, the progress shown at this point was close to 60%. If the system started when the "Magallanica" moved, there's probably about 30 minutes until all the satellites were remotely controlled. The comms with the "Nahel Argama" indicated that the military wireless comms were hijacked, yet the worst news was heard. Mineva drifted away from the panel, her eyes looking around the room the size of a small concert hall.

There was a round stage in the middle of the dome, a podium of the same make as the Prime Minister Residence "Laplace". The sight of the podium being lit by spotlights resembled a concert stage, but seats were not placed around her, just many monitors and control panels with flashing lights, along with dome cameras placed at intervals. Right when the system was activated, this place would become a studio linking to the entire world. This place would become a real fortress exerting control over thousands of satellites, over all the broadcast waves, to be conveyed to 12 billion people.

if they lose this place, they would lose the chance to shout out to the entire world. The thoughts entrusted into this “Laplace Box”, along with the thoughts of those who lived a hundred years waiting to entrust it; it would all be for naught. Mineva looked up at the lit podium, holding firmly the headphones as she hissed, “When’s ECOAS expected to arrive?” Zimmerman answered, “They left the revolving residential block. Another 5 minutes at most.”

“Please wait…another 30 minutes. Once the system is activated, we can reveal the Truth of the “Box” to the entire world. If we inform the media under the Federation’s control, it will overwhelm them. Just a minute more ”

‘“We don’t have the time. Please move away, and head to the stern.”’

“We need to collect the stone tablet. The original Universal Century is still in the cryo. We can’t lose it..”

“Princess, the colony laser might have been fired at this point.”’

The affirmative tone cut her off, and she could not refute. Her numb body shook as she drifted in zero gravity again. *“It’s over.”’ Zimmerman’s heavy voice rang again.*

“I think you know very well, Princess. Marida allowed us the chance to know about this. For her sake, we can’t lose your life, Princess.”’

“Zimmerman…”

‘“As long as we live, there will always be a next time. Please…”’

Zimmerman eked a voice of bitterness that was obvious even over the wireless. No matter how he tried, the situation was beyond his grasp, and he had no time to accept this illogical turn of events. His voice was so heavy, for he was well acquainted with defeat, and the excuse to escape mercilessly rang through his heart and soul. *The next chance will never come. You know that best, do you not?” The rebuttal melted in Mineva’s mouth as she stared blankly at the monitors depicting the inside and outside of the ship. One of the surveillance cameras showed a tank mode “Loto” heading straight forth.*

It probably was Conroy and the others who were headed towards her. They did not know when the colony laser would be fired, but they were risking their lives to save her. It was not the first time this would happen, for Mineva herself had experienced this countless times. The soldiers of Zeron willingly became pawns to allow her to escape, to survive. After witnessing every sacrifice, Mineva knew her life did not belong to herself. She had to survive even if she had to grovel, for it

was her duty as part of the Zabi bloodline. The life of Mineva Lao Zabi was filled with such reasons to convince herself, to ease the tragedies of having to run away all this time.

Perhaps her life as Audrey Burne was the first time she escaped from the cage that was her heart. “Tell me when you need me.” What Banagher said was also what she wanted to tell herself. She did not need to be the heir to the Zabis, but to be herself. “à mon seul désir”. This was once in the hands of the person known as Audrey..

And then, she would lose everything. She had to protect the life that did not belong to her. The days of returning to her soul prison loomed. *It is over.'' Mineva muttered in her heart as she looked at the podium that seemed very distant.* “Right, Audrey, get away from there.”'' A familiar voice rang through the wireless.

‘“I'll protect the “Laplace Box”. I'll do it!”'’

Mineva's eyes looked back at the panel, up at the monitors. A phosphorus light glided by in an instant, and Mineva stared at all the external footage. The “Unicorn Gundam” passed the bow of the “Magallanica”, went towards the revolving residential block, and blared its thrusters as it slowed down. The white humanoid drifted in space, devoid of weapons and shield as it floated next to the “Magallanica”.

“Banagher……”

Its eyes cast aside the despair that once was, giving off a faint light. The humanoid encompassed in phosphorus resembled Banagher himself, and Mineva sensed uneasiness from nowhere.

Part 28[edit]

The white machine not even the size of a dot positioned itself next to the revolving residential block with a weapons pod. Otto got up from the captain seat, and before he could talk, “What are you doing, Banagher!?” Zimmerman hollered. The bridge was slow to react, and the mood instantly got tense.

“The ship should have some of the “Unicorn” spare parts. Please deploy them all. I'm going to set a psycofield barrier around the “Magallanica”.'’

The answer was beyond expectations, leaving Zimmerman and Liam wide mouthed. They were waiting for ECOAS to retrieve Mineva, and the "Nahel Argama” slowly pulled its distance from the “Magallanica”. Riddhe and the others were drifting at least 10km away. Even then, there was no guarantee that they could escape the direct hit from the

colony laser, and it was too reckless to stay before the “Magallanica” and take it on. The talk about the barrier and such were beyond Otto’s understanding as he turned to a dumbfounded Aaron. *Is is possible?’’ before he could ask, “That’s too reckless!” Aaron yelled as he kicked off the floor, closing in on the “Unicorn Gundam” shown on the expanded footage.*

“It has the power to interfere with mass, but the characteristics of the psycofield remains unknown. Nobody can guarantee that it can work as a barrier to block the laser.”

“Yeah. Don’t do this stupid things, Banagher. It’s completely different from the “Garencieres”!”

Zimmerman roared. Otto had no disagreement as he watched the white machine with bated breath. After a short pause, *“It’s a possibility because it’s unknown.”’’ Banagher answered, the strange calmness causing goosebumps.*

‘“The psycofield can move a planet. Nobody can guarantee that it can’t block a laser, right?”’’

“That’s preposterous! And if there’s really such a large psycofield, the “Unicorn” at the core will…”

Aaron was suddenly silent, and Zimmerman shot him a bloody glare, “What?” Aaron lowered his head, “I don’t know.” He answered, sounding a little furious.

“But the two mobile suits at the center of the “Axis Shock” never came back, including their pilots…”

Zimmerman’s mouth remained agape, his massive body taking two steps back. It appeared the psycoframe had the characteristic of absorbing a human’s will and turning it into energy—its complete activation would require the machine and pilot at its core. *He’s using him existence as the price?’’ Otto could not imagine this as he looked up at the ”Unicorn Gundam” standing still in space.* “There’s no time, please proceed, Captain Otto.”’’ Banagher’s voice had everyone looking towards Otto, who could not retract his tense mouth. The chair handles were creaking, for he was grabbing firmly onto them.

“We know that the “Laplace Box”…the original Universal Century Charter was made out of humanity’s goodwill. Everyone has the right to know this, so we have a need to tell them. This relic of the old era belongs to all the living humans now.”’’

To let all Newtypes adapted to space participate in the

government everyone knew the truth hidden in the “Box” after Mineva spoke of it, but Banagher’s explanation seemed a little different. “Goodwill, relic…” Otto muttered as he glanced towards the “Magallanica” outside the window with his naked eyes. Liam, Zimmerman, Aaron and the others remained silent, staring at the massive ship that was “Laplace Box” itself.

‘“Maybe things won’t change, but as long as it’s a momentary light, as long as we connect the light of possibilities—”’

“Don’t be ridiculous!”

A sudden shriek cast aside the silence in the bridge. A girl was standing at the entrance of the airlock, and when Otto recalled the name Micott, the girl kicked off the wall next to the door, and passed by behind him.

“Hey, Micott!” Takuya Irei sounded sceptical as he too entered the bridge with the mascot robot Haro in hands. Micott didn’t look back as she nudged aside the surprised Mihiro, tapping at the panel. “You can’t just barge…” Liam intended to stop Micott, but the latter did not stop as she picked up the spare headset, mic to her mouth. “What relic, what possibilities!” The eruption voice stopped both Takuya and Liam.

“So what if you don’t have these? It’s a world of mistakes, a world with erased possibilities, but isn’t it good enough if everyone can continue to live!?”

‘Micott…’

“You’re really stupid to risk your life for this…come back, Banagher. I had enough of people dying. We can do anything as long as we’re still alive…”

The voice gradually broke into a whimper, and Micott lay prone. Takuya slowly approached her, put his hands on her shoulders, and the floating Haro flapped its two metallic ear discs, “Come back, Banagher. Come back, Banagher.” Otto turned his eyes outside.

What Micott said might be most correct. They were merely going with the flow, and drifted all the way here. They did not start with the objective to open the “Box”. The result was borne, and it was not the result they hoped for, but they were certain that the “Laplace Box” really existed, and what it was. If Captain Bright was around, it might be possible for them to use this information to ensure the safety of the crew. It was most important that everyone was to live—Otto knew that well, very well, but why could he not say it? Did he want to give up? The rhetorical answer was swirling in his heart, and he remained silent,

unable to speak up. *“Micott”” Banagher’s voice rang in the wireless.*

‘I never understood anything about my father. And I lived together with my mother, but I never understood anything about her. I just didn’t understand anything. I felt out of place. Right now though, I know. My parents gave birth to me, they raised me, for my sake.”’

The “Unicorn Gundam” in the footage twitched its head as a calm voice continued. The human-looking eyes seemed to be glowing, staring at Micott. “Banagher…” Micott’s hoarse voice echoed in the bridge.

“I feel relieved to know that. I’ve accepted who I am. This relieves me. I’ve accepted the current me, and have started to think of the meaning of this future. The people who started the Universal Century 100 years ago didn’t just abandon people in space. They sent humanity as a prayer, doing what they could do. If everyone can understand…”

Micott wanted to say something, but she could not, and could only stare at the “Unicorn Gundam” with damp eyes as her last bit of defiance. Takuya lifted her floating body from behind, and they left the panel. Otto saw those two as he heard a call, “Captain…” he turned aside, and exchanged looks with Liam, who was prompting him.

There was no time. The colony laser might be fired in the next second. The “Rewloola” was within firing range. They should lit the light of possibilities, to convey the kindness—he closed his eyes, pondering, and when he opened his eyes, he made up his mind as he looked forward.

“Send all the “Unicorn” spare parts onto the catapult and fire them all. Once done, reverse at maximum speed, and break away from the “Magallanica”.”

I’ll probably regret this till death.’’ Otto made up his mind as he gave the order, and reclined into the captain’s seat. Nobody opposed, and there was only silence before Liam repeated the command, followed by Mihiro and the others conveying it to everyone.

Micott herself was the only one standing dumbfounded, giving Otto a look of disbelief. *Why?’’ She scanned Otto, Zimmerman, Aaron and Liam, but none of them could answer her. She had nowhere to look to. The adults in the room regretted the past, but they were unwilling to excuse themselves at this point. Her legs went limp, and she looked towards the ”Unicorn Gundam” once again.*

“Seriously, men all like so conceited…!”

The criticism rang throughout the bridge, not just directed at Banagher, but also to all on deck. *You're completely correct.'' Otto quietly noted.*

Part 29[edit]

The spare shield and repair parts were fired out of the catapult, gliding in space. They left the catapult deck of the "Nahel Argama", glowing as they reflected some moonlight, and several trails of light glided towards the "Magallanica".

It might be the last farewell to their comrade who stayed tears of farewell. Riddhe saw the light trails fly from the white ship as he thought of these words, and shook his head as he looked forward. The new crates tossed from the Base Jabber drifted before the "Banshee". The machine was no longer in Destroy mode, and Alberto's voice came from the wireless. *"Scatter them all over, around the "Magallanica""'' The Base Jabber turned towards the "Magallanica" .*

"Give a little more psycoframe. It'll be better for him. Another round.""'

The flat Base Jabber blared its thrusters, and a new container was released. Nigel's "Jesta" grabbed it from the size, and opened it like a cardboard box. The "Banshee" spare parts floated, and the "Jesta" floated as it held the container, scattering psycoframe parts along the way. The thrusters flare crossed his unit, and the other "Jesta" resembled a trail of scrap metal.

''This boss sure knows how to give commands.""'

'""Will this really work?""'

Nigel and Daryl voiced out. *"Look, I don't want to die together. This is our last ride.""' The pilot of the Base Jabber answered. There were 8 containers, including the one unsealed, and it contained an entire Unicorn type worth of psycoframes. They had to time their relative velocity to deposit these materials around the "Magallanica", so they did not simply discard them. Nigel and the others moved up the "Magallanica", and Riddhe in the "Banshee" went down, looking at the massive weapons pod above him as he continued to scatter materials.*

Another five minutes passed after Banagher conversed with the captain. Once they made up their mind, they moved quickly, and everyone was busy with their work. *We're helping some hopeless fool here''—Riddhe ignored his sanity that was arguing so as he paid attention to the open wireless channel. The "Nahel Argama" was 50km away, but the wireless connection with the "Magallanica" remained. He passed below the revolving residential block, and there was suddenly a familiar voice in the wireless* "I want to stay too."'' That jolted

Riddhe's heart.

"Princess! Listen to me ""'

'"This is my first, and last instance of stubbornness. Forgive me, Zimmerman.""'

'It takes too much time to retreat now. Since Her Highness Mineva says so, we'll bet it all on the "Unicorn".""'

A poised voice followed Mineva's queenly tone. It probably was the ECOAS commander who was sent to retrieve Mineva. '"Commander Conroy, you too…!"'' Was it the Neo Zeon commander who moved to the "Nahel Argama" alongside Mineva? So Riddhe wondered as he looked at the "Magallanica" he had already passed. *"No, Audrey! You have to live until the very end!""' Riddhe's heart jolted again as he heard this voice..*

"That is what I plan to do, Banagher. I trust you.""'

"Audrey…!""'

'"You believe, do you not? Do it then. Also, do return to us. I will not allow you to break the promise.""'

The "Unicorn Gundam" could not be seen, for it was positioned in a completely opposite position. Riddhe could easily imagine the expression on the speechless Banagher however. "So dazzling…" Riddhe grimaced, the last burden in his heart lowered with his smile, and he dumped aside the emptied container. *"Alright, that's all. We're retreating Riddhe.""' Nigel's voice came without warning, and the"Jesta" could be seen turning back in an arc.*

"Please leave. I want to stay here."

It was not something he suddenly thought of, nor was it something he put much thought into. Riddhe parked the slowed "Banshee" by the "Magallanica". '"Riddhe…!?""' Nigel growled, and the "Jesta" looked down in confusion.

"This "Banshee" is built with psycoframes too. It should be able to help somewhat."

He did not do this for redemption, but to believe in possibilities. He wanted everyone to live, and to personally witness the moment the century curse became a prayer. *"But…!""' Nigel groaned, but Alberto interrupted.* "Is this fine?""' Riddhe saw the Base Jabber pass behind the "Jesta" on the main camera, its actions being the reply. The Base Jabber took a large curve back, perhaps having noticed the "Banshee"

lifting its head silently, its bow turned towards the “Nahel Argama”.

“‘…I understand. I’ll ask to stop the attack. We’ll meet again.”’

“Understood. Give dad my greetings. Tell him that his son’s going to finish what he couldn’t do.”

There was no response, only silence. The Base Jabber slowly faded away. Nigel’s “Jesta” seemed to have given up, and as prompted by Daryl, it followed the Base Jabber bask. Riddhe exhaled, and leaned into the linear seat.

He no longer felt fear, nor did he feel disjointed nor jealousy. His heart was merely filled with a prayer. Riddhe saw the bow of the “Magallanica” turn towards Earth. Did Ricardo feel the same a century ago? The psycoframes drifting in space seemed to affirm as they glowed in a different way from reflected light. There was a rainbow glow stronger than the countless stars.

Part 30[edit]

The fingers synchronized with the machine extended to the sides. An invisible pulse was released from the manipulators, rocking the materials. The psycoframe materials that were still glowing slowly wrapped around the “Magallanica”. The light covered the ship that was 6,500 meters, forming a sphere, and showed a phosphorus glow in a corner of the shoal space region.

A sensory wave was set to the various parts, the psycofield yet to be established. All the ‘energy’ had to be released if the parts were to resonate powerfully enough to establish physical interference. It was not something that could be done with just thought, but Banagher had a baseless assumption that he could do it when needed, and did not think about it. He did not have much strength to think about these things, given that he had to exert ‘energy’ into these parts. The power was seeping through all the pores, and he suddenly had a fear that he might be absorbed away by the light.

But Audrey was around, and Banagher could sense the “Banshee” on the other side helping to increase the resonance. This actual feeling became ‘heat’, and Banagher sensed the new power arising in his heart. He could feel the endless energy created in his heart…this was the source of the ‘light’, the embodiment of humanity’s kindness and strength that was to be displayed to the world..

Is this fine?”

The cockpit was filled with resonating light, along with the thoughts of

his father. Banagher did not answer. *You buried words deep in my heart, and even now, you're appearing in my mind. You raised me to be like this, and you're still asking"..perhaps Banagher should grumble a few words.*

Part 31[edit]

But his father had no choice. The man raised children to fulfill the life he could not be satisfied with, and entrusted his will upon them. He hoped for them to be free, to grow freely, but unwittingly burdened them with his life debts. Such was a father. Banagher understood how his mother hated his father because of this, yet loved him so. There was a divide between men and women that could not be passed; parents and children could not convey their thoughts and feelings… and the anxiety looked so adorable. They hurt each other because they could not communicate, but they would love without learning their lessons. The passing of wills in the form of genes was the hope that they would be revived in the distant future. The foolish yet strong bond of physical flesh was something Banagher found to be ever precious.

He, part of this chain, could no longer return to the bond of the human body. Frontal said that the price of the ultimate resonance was the loss of the vessel called Banagher Links. The place for people to exchange thoughts, the rainbow in the distance causing time to brighter than ever…to obtain the power to move the planets and contort light, perhaps that was him living beyond the boundary. Humanity still could not move beyond in their physical vessels. The endpoint of this intellectual evolution, to become real Newtypes, might be—

His heart was suddenly struck with pain, and his body was immobilized with loneliness, as though he was splintered from the world. He could no longer see Audrye, could no longer interact with her, and he could not feel the soft touch of her lips. *I should have embraced her tighter. I should have etched the fragrance of her hair onto myself." Banagher gritted his teeth as he endured the urge to yell. His consciousness drifted towards the 'light' that still retained some human thought.*

Audrey did not want to waste time praying as she checked on the comms. Conroy and the ECOAS members were hurrying towards Audrey, Riddhe in the "Banshee" was watching the world with clear eyes. Zimmerman and Otto were on the bridge of the "Nahel Argama" that had retreated to a safe zone, looking out of the window. Takuya was embracing Micoot, Haro was floating behind them, and they were staring at the "Magallanica" 100km away. The "Jestas" landed on the deck of the "Nahel Argama". Alberto was on the Base Jabber with the comms function. He was contacting the Federation army, the voice

that became reality rocked Banagher's ears.

"…It's not just me. Ensign Riddhe, the son of Senator Marcenasis is here. If you aren't opening the comms circuit, try using the emergency wireless channel. Don't persist with the conversation. Just tell them, convey my words to the 'Caucasus Forest'.""'

Alberto's voice sounded anxious, but he was no longer as hysterical as he was before. They were of the same bloodline and perhaps they could finally sit down and have a talk, but they never had the time. There were so many things he could not do, and never got to complete. *I don't want to leave in such a situation,'' this thought echoed strongly in Banagher's heart. He did not want to lose his relationships with these people, all to get an 'ego'. Loni had said he should not lose himself. If he surpassed the limit that was his physical body, there was no way he could convey warmth.*

"I'll return, definitely…!"

He yelled, and lifted his head. The psycoframes drifting in space resonated strongly with the "Unicorn Gundam", the phosphorus light exuded from the machine became a rainbow, the bright blue and faint green meshing together, gradually filling the cockpit. Banagher closed his eyes, focused his attention on the colony laser far away. The "Unicorn Gundam" might have sensed the rumbling of the massive energy, for its eyes gave an intense glow…and a beast's roar rang in the voice.

Part 32[edit]

"…Alberto?"

Martha shot a questioning look, and one operator groaned, looking terrified. There were less than two minutes until the laser was fired, and the sudden, expected report had Ronan looking towards the monitor, and the operator..

"What's going on? I told that child about the 'Gryphios 2', so he should be with the "General Revil". Why is he next to the "Magallanica"…?"

The blood was slowly drained from Martha's face as she answered; so too was the operator who conveyed the report from the "General Revil". He gave a pleading look to the commander seat, but Aibres too was perturbed by this unexpected turn of events. There was a tense mood in the control room, and Bright was the first to move. He nudged a muzzle aside as he approached the operator. "Hey…!" The guard

called out, but Ronan raised a hand to cut off the guard, and looked towards Bright's back while the latter snatched the headset..

"I'm Captain bright of Londo Bell. I want to speak to ship captain Maseki of the "General Revil"."

Bright initiated the conversation as he stared at the target on the monitor. Ronan too looked back at the distant visual of the "Magallanica", at the countless machines around the massive ship. The "Nahel Argama" had retreated into a safe zone, but there appeared to be two mobile suits next to the "Magallanica". There was grainy, block noise on the footage, but the analysis showed that they were Unicorn-types. It was one thing for the "Box" key, the first unit to be there, but why was the second unit, sent as the assassin of the Foundation, just remaining there as though it was protecting the "Magallanica"? Ronan had many doubts, but the issue at hand was not the movements of the machines.

There was a Base Jabber in the space approximately 50km away, flashing as it sent a laser signal was it him? Alberto Vist, the eldest son of the ex-chairman of the Foundation, Cardeas Vist, got involved in this situation as Martha's confidant, yet he would not leave the "Magallanica". The listless movements seemed to indicate that he was trying to prevent the firing of the colony laser. The "Nahel Argama *was beginning to retreat, so perhaps it too obtained intel from Alberto. Ronan had a feeling that Martha would not be playing tricks, and spotted Aibres approaching from behind. "If he's in that Base Jabber, he's going to be caught in the laser." Aibres whispered as he glanced aside at Martha.*

"If we stop the countdown now, it'll take a really long time to restart. There's also a possibility of short-circuiting it, and being unusable "

"It is fine."

Martha suddenly said, and Aibres's shoulders shivered. Ronan gasped as he looked back at Martha, who was standing some way away from him.

"Continue the countdown."

She continued with a calm tone, her expression erased from her face as she looked towards the monitor. Patricide Ronan witnessed a destiny that was about to be repeated, saw the countdown being less than a minute, and looked away from Martha, who was not looking at anyone in particular, merely passing glances. Aibres remained silent as he returned to the podium of the commander seat, ignoring Bright

who was handling the wireless communications with the “General Revil”. “Capacity, particle filament formed. Base trajectory set.” The operators’ stoic voices range, and the mood of the control room turned tense in the final phase..

“Laser agitation medium is now moving erratically.”

“Vibration caused by resonating waves detected in the cylinder.”

“Adjusting cooling circulation. Mass balancing done.”

“Angle stabilizer activated.”

“Impending actual output at 92 million Gigawatts per second.”

The operators reported, and the tip of the “Gryphios 2” gave a strong glow. The thousands of capacitors installed in it started to resonate, and the massive cylinder resembling a vacuum tube glowed, giving off light inside this colony-sized object. The output of 92 million Gigawatts per second was the equivalent of a colony’s annual energy consumption. The “Nahel Argama” might be able to escape given that it was retreating, but the “Magallanica *would not escape its fate of destruction. Looking on, the “Gryphios 2” resembled a celestial torchlight. Ronan looked up at it, and closed his eyes for a moment. 29, 28, 27…the countdown voice echoed, and Martha, staring at the monitor adamantly, started to shiver.* “Senator Ronan”

Less than 20 seconds on the meter, Bright’s voice came from the operator seat. Ronan looked towards him, his heart still jolting.

“Your son, Ensign Riddhe, is over there now!”

For a moment, Ronan did not understand what was said, “What…?” he uttered unwittingly, turning his stunned face towards Bright.

“It appears he’s piloting the second “Unicorn” unit. This is what Mr Alberto said…!”

Bright said, and brought the headset to his ear again. The “Magallanica” stood poignantly behind him, and next to the 6,500m long snail shell were the Unicorn-types who were not even a speck —“How…why!?” Martha’s yelled awoke Ronan’s numbed mind, and he looked up at Aibres on the seat. The countdown was less than 10 seconds. “We can’t do anything!” A lament echoed in the control room.

“We don’t know what will happen if we stop now. We can’t stop!”

The scene of him personally embracing his son appeared in his blank mind. “Increasing output. Limit reached.” “Restraint field, removed.”

The operators' voices continued. 5, 4, 3, 2…''yell, shout, kneel down and beg for forgiveness.'' His heart was filled with many turbulent voices, but he could not move despite looking up at the commander seat, at Aibres' face. The latter's eyes were bloodshot as he weighed the possibility of having the head of the Settlement Issues Council owe him a favour for eternity, against the massive maintenance costs of the colony laser that could be wasted. Aibres closed his eyes, trying to hide his bias. A moment later, he opened his eyes, not looking at Ronan, but forward towards the "Gryphios 2" on the monitor.

"…Fire. Fire away."

Aibres' contorted face eked out this command, and the monitor showed a powerful light. *Stop!'' Ronan yelled in his heart, but one had to wonder if his voice took form. He stumbled forth, and the light scorching the source of it all filled the control room. Ronan had a vision of his son being vanquished.*

Part 33[edit]

The Lagrange Point, L3 was beyond Earth, located opposite the Moon. There was nothing special in this space other than the Federation space headquarters "Luna 2", and the colony laser"Gryphios 2". The cylinder 15km in length was rumbling, the barrel 6km wide was exuding a scorching laser light.

The moment it was fired, one could see it spitting out a block of light, the result of the scorched residue in the cannon. The cannon was filled with a gaseous combination of carbon dioxide, nitrogen and helium, activated through the capacitors at the base. The restraining field next to the cannon sealed the charged gases, only bursting at its limit. Using the old era concept of laser oscillation, the charge was expanded to the size of a colony. The only thing different from a beam weapon was thatthere was no light to be seen. Once the explosive surge of light exploded, the laser would become an invisible light gliding through space, only showing torrents of light when it made contact with anything it touched. Due to the many years of exacavation and war in the Earth Celestial Sphere, there were lots of debris floating about, and trails of light would show the trajectory.

The distance to the target in the shoal space region was 795,000 kilometers. Even a laser travelling at lightspeed would take 2.65 seconds. The trajectory might have deviated a little due to the Earth's gravity, but the laser continued to move towards its target. The axis of the beam kept spreading, for within the 2 seconds of firing, the angle of the "Gryphios 2" cannon was a little deviated. The laser 6km wide was already a 200km belt when it reached the shoal space region,

eradicating all the space debris in its path. The first lifeforms to be devoured by the torrent of light were the members of the three ships navigating the shoal space region.

“Prepare for anti-ship combat. Once we fire away, launch the first wave of mobile suits. Prioritize saving Captain Frontal. Don’t let the “Mock Trojan Horse” approach the colony builder.”

They had pursued the colony builder that left “Industrial 7”, and the”Mock Trojan Horse” was finally within firing range. Hill broadcasted to the ships, and stared at the space before him in the battle bridge of the “Rewloola”. The light signal from Frontal was gone for a long time, and they could only deduce the enemy’s situation through far ranged visuals. They did not know the objectives and the firepower of the colony builder that moved, so they should avoid direct confrontation. Sending scouts out was a typical strategy, but if they lost Frontal, there was no way back. This notion drove Hill into deciding to attack.

If news of Frontal’s unit taken down reached them, the fleet would lose control. They could only attack the colony builder under the pretense of seeking and saving Frontal, and steal the “Laplace Box”. If they could do it, they could maintain the morale of the soldiers, and the Republic of Zeon, which remained silent the entire time, would surely contact them. In other words, they would going to make it a reality. Hill muttered in his heart as he looked towards the “Mock Trojan Horse” on the targeting screen. However, the ship that lost a catapult deck remained responseless. They did not fire a missile; did they expend them all during the prior battle?

“The mobile suits on deck don’t look like they’re sortieing…how far is it from the colony builder?”

“250km. Getting further.”

The second in charge seated next to him answered. Even if the “Mock Trojan Horse” was to deploy mobile suits, they were already far within a defensible area. It had abandoned the colony builder with the “Laplace Box”, and was leaving at full speed. Surely it was not enticing them?

“That’s weird…”

Hill muttered, and the moment his second in charge was about to answer, a ravaging light struck them from behind, vaporizing countless debris and swallowing the “Rewloola” whole.

The instance came so quickly, they did not realize that they died. The light immediately melted the “Rewloola”, and the crimson ship was

blown apart like leaves. Hill was thrown off the captain seat, and was burned to nothingness before he could crash into the screen panel before him, scattered as parched dust. The engine tanks tied to the deck exploded one after another. The frame of the “Rewloola” was snapped apart, and it split into two. Next to it, the two Musaka-class cruisers were vaporized. The “Geara Zulus” waiting to sortie on the catapult deck were charred in less than a millisecond. Three explosions flashed through the torrent of light, vanishing immediately. All traces of the “Sleeves” were reduced to space dust, not even space debris.

The vortex of the colony laser continued forward, vanquishing thousands of debris, rocks and metals in its path as it continued to overheat. The expanding, massive light shot through the shoal space region, forming a vacuum tunnel in the sea of debris. It continued to fly towards the fixed position of “Industrial 7” and struck its target, the “Magallanica”.

Part 34[edit]

The psycoframe parts were swaying, as though lifted by the wind. It was a sign. The moment Banagher braced himself, a light took his breath away, looming forth, dyeing his vision white.

The rainbow light of the psycoframe was devoured by the overheated light, and the “Unicorn Gundam” was parried aside, creaking away. *I’ll be burned to death.’’ He felt this fear at that moment. His mind and flesh, embalmed in light, returned to space, and he felt himself floating in the world of light.*

The consciousness breathing in the “Unicorn Gundam” was starting to rise, resonating with Banagher’s thoughts. Cardeas, Marida, Daguza… the remaining traces of these familiar people were not actually them, but yet somewhat time. They had passed the boundary, and were at a place that could not be explained with the concept of three dimensions. They could be said to exist everywhere, yet not exist at all. They were part of the ‘collective’, with no ‘ego’ that could be felt from the flesh. Banagher however realized that they remembered those moments.

One by one, they meshed together, were led into his heart, and guided him—or rather, he went and became part of them—Banagher saw time rewind in the light. The light of the colony light overwhelming him, the battle against Frontal, the darkness of the cryo, Marida’s ‘voice’ echoing through the battlefield, his kiss with Audrey, the gunshots in the “Nahel Argama”, the “L1 Lagrange Point” fading away like a

snowflake, the “Garencieres” engulfed in the rainbow light as it sank into the atmosphere. Banagher’s thoughts too were dragged deep into Earth’s gravity.

There was also the space fortress “Garuda” surrounded in flames, Alberto yelling at him while pointing a gun, Marida piloting the “Banshee”, Riddhe’s “Delta Plus” flying about, the Zeon army remnants attaching Triton Base in old mobile suits, the madness at Dakar, the massive mobile armor…’’yes, that’s the moment Miss Loni died’’. Ahh, Banagher finally felt a belated lament. The sight of him wandering the desert with Zimmerman, when he saw the starry sky melting away when he was dragged into space. The sight of “Laplace” wreckage being burned away.

Gilboa’s “Geara Zulu” was splintered by the limbs, Daguza’s body was vaporized, the berserking “Unicorn Gundam” attacked the “Kshatriya”, the sadness he saw of marida the first time he shared consciousness with others. The pain and exploding emotions when he recognized what was going on, and his thoughts returned back to “Industrial 7”, the days when he felt ‘disjointed’ from the world before he saw everything.

The first time he entered the mini mobile suit, the nervousness and overwhelming emotion he felt when he entered spac, the Anaheim technical school shone upon by the artificial sun, his mother’s funeral done at a common graveyard, the stench from his hometown colony—felt so nostalgic. There was the couple next door arguing, the brakes of the bicycle echoing in the night, Haro’s eyes blinking. Mom’s back from her night job. The reflection on the water surface, the pet bottle boat floating on it…it’s not a sight of the colony, but when the house was on Earth. There was a lake nearby, and his father showed a rare smile under the dazzling sunlight. The plane clouds pulled white trails in the air, and his mother’s piano sounds could be heard afar—

A vanishing life would replay its fading lights at the very end…it was shared with ‘everything’, preserved with the emotions felt back then, never to disappear again. The ‘lights’ formed within oneself would pass one after another, reforming as the ‘ego’ was peeled layer by layer, meshed into the ‘collective’. At this point, Banagher was part of the ‘collective’, and the ‘collective’ itself. It, a fusion of countless thoughts, looked towards the host called the “Unicorn Gundam”, as it stared into the chaos, weaving humanity’s war.

The commotion that would be known later as the Laplace War instantly vanished in a single light. After the destruction of Zeon, the Federation’s peace would not last a quarter of the century before a

new rebel movement began, engulfing space and Earth in war. It would extend from the Earth Celestial Sphere to Mars and Jupiter. The more humanity's living space increased, so would the flames of war. The unmanned weapons would kill indiscriminately, and there would be a beam satellite more potent than the colony laser. Earth's skies, Mar's lands, the eternally frozen lands of the satellite surrounding Jupiter, the mobile suits taking after the "Gundam" would continue to run.

A hundred years, two hundred…the regular cycle of destruction and rebirth would continue. Humanity's still humanity, and would continue to fight for dominion in the extremely small space in this universe. Time and light remained a high wall that could not be overcome. There were no different civilizations reaching out to humanity. Humanity never changed, they never would learn, and even the name Newtype would be buried in the abyss of oblivion. As Syam would predict, it would be a future without change—was the human revolution just a dream? Possibilities merely remained as possibilities, just an instance of 'light' in the eternally passing time? Banagher asked the 'collective', and he, as part of it, heard a throbbing heartbeat.

Thud, thud, the sound echoing in the vacuum seemed to be from the inside, and yet from the outside. The sound he once heard in the cryo was the same he heard many times in the "Unicorn Gundam". The repeated expansion and contraction, the repeated destruction and rebirth of humanity as they carved the rhythm of life. It's full of life, the sound of life that's showing itself in eternity—!

It's not a repeat. It felt like a loop in a sealed ring, but the world did not remain at a single place. Humanity would be pushed forth by the sounds of life, and would continue to move on without thought. They would be beckoned to be better, driven by illogical instincts, and would walk down the long, massive spiral called the wheel of time.

This path was not a mistake. Would foresight be the start of a misfortunate? There were some who were imprisoned by such doubts, but humanity's steps would not step. They would be driven by instinct to act, and perhaps in this sense, were not too different from animals. Just as the birds would fly South, the Caribous wandering the wilderness, humanity would seek the supernatural, and this order of events would continue. They would be driven by 'ego', led by the trace of kindness, and would seek the 'light' of possibility as they move up the spiral staircase of time.

At the end of these steps after countless eras and wheels of time, Banagher saw another possibility. After the cycles of destruction and

rebirth, the Earth would need a long rest. It decided that thousands of years later, people would live on the revived Earth, and the same life would happen between Earth and the Moon. The spacenoids would leave the Earth Celestial Sphere, the excessive population would live on artificial lands…thus would be the end of the mission called the evolution cradle. They broke free from the solar system, their ships headed out of the distant Milky Way. Its belly was lit by light, and like fish, they would head towards the glowing water surface, towards the 'next world' on the other side. They would not be headed here, but beyond the other rainbow.

They would obtain the technology to surpass light, but would be no different from humanity at this point. Even if those 'lights' were in the far distance, they continued to reflect, moving to the distant end of the wheel of time, their hearts being moved. *The future is just the result of today.'' Banagher heard Audrey say this.* There is no need to despair, no need to be anxious. Just connect to the 'lights' of possibilities that were there out of kindness. The 'promised future' has always been in our hands. The moment we looked at the water surface from the dark abyss, the journey to the other end had begun.

Thud, thud thud…the lively heartbeats continued, and the psycoframes acting as relay between the 'two worlds' resonated. The "Unicorn Gundam" was floating in the scorching wilderness, giving off a rainbow light. It's a power flowing from the 'collective', the field of souls released by the countless 'lights'. The spirits that became the cores harkened the past and the future. Banagher's existence was expanding and overflowing from his body, and he too was caught in this heartbeat filled with the breath of time.

Everything became the heat of a bawling baby, the smile of a mother smiling peacefully on the bed, the hands of a father who was unused to this. With the sun still smiling for a million years, this would be a new cluster of 'lights' born. The chain of 'light' linking beyond the time dazzled radiantly—

Banagher Links saw the world.

Epilogue[edit]

O this is the beast who does not exist.

They didn't know that, and in any case

--with its stance, its arched neck and easy grace,

the light of its limpid gaze --they could not resist

but loved it though, indeed, it was not. Yet since
they always gave it room, the pure beast persisted.
And in that loving space, clear and unfenced,
reared it's head freely and hardly needed...

to exist. They fed it not with grain nor chaff
but fortified and nourished it solely with
the notion that it might yet come to pass,

so that, at length, it grew a single shaft
upon it's brow and to a virgin came--
and dwelled in her and in her silvered glass.

Rainer Maria Rilke 'Die Sonette an Orpheus', Part 2, 4th poem

The tornado of noise filled the screen, and showed no signs of fading. All contact from the surrounding surveillance satellites of “Gryphios 2”, along with most cameras from the moon. More than half of the multi-screen monitors were covered with noise. It appeared that a massive surge of energy had turned into an electronic interference. There was nary a pause as some wireless noise flowered through the silent ‘Caucasus Forest’, passing through the ears of the men and women who were looking up at the screen with bated breath. “We have a report from Cheyenne Observatory. Confirming that laser has hit the target.” An operator called in, but there was no applause, no cheers. Martha, Bright, Aibres, everyone stared wordlessly at the noise tornado. It took them more than half a minute to accept the fact that it happened.

Finally, there was some semblance of recovery on the screen, and the mood in the control room suddenly turned tense. The observation

camera kept correcting itself, depicting the target area, the shoal space region. Ronan unwittingly grabbed the railing, and stared at the space where the “Magallanica” should once stand. However, there was a faint mist-like light engulfing it. “Where’s the target?” Aibres’ voice came from the commander seat, and there was some tension between the operators.

“We can’t tell. There appears to be gas debris in the way.”

“Make it quick. Check from the moon and all the stationed troops at the various Sides. Nobody is allowed to enter or leave until we know what’s going on.”

His voice was lifeless and vague, and he gave Ronan a sheepish look, but the latter merely stared at the bluish white mist. Riddhe was once there—Ronan had the urge to grab Bright by the collar and ask about the details, but he had no courage to do it. His mouth and body could not move, and his mind had ceased all judgment, with intermittent urges to reproach himself. *What am I doing? The Federation’s future… future? I sacrificed something that should remain in this world for the future?*

“It is…over.”

Martha muttered, looking utterly dumbfounded. Bright, standing still, turned his head slightly towards Ronan with pity and fury. He too could not affirm the safety of the “Nahel Argama”, and could only anticipate at this point. Ronan immediately looked towards Bright, who turned his face aside, and thought he could only hope. However, he felt something strangely amiss about his own thoughts.

Wait for what? There's no future here. Nothing would change no matter how long it too. Only the present world will flow, until death.

“To Earth…space…all the people in this world …”

While there was a little commotion amongst the operators, there was a fine female voice. Ronan’s hand on the railing shivered as he listened to the voice amidst the noise.

Martha and Bright lifted their heads in unison. The operators started to realize something, and looked around. The female voice continued on. “What’s going on?” Aibres stood from his seat, and the voice clearly stated a name.

“I am…Mineva Lao Zabi. I apologize for having to communicate in this manner.”

The voice that caused everyone present to freeze got clearer. There

was a chaotic mood in the control room, the operators got to work, their heads moving frantically. *Impossible,* Ronan was unable to muster such a thought, and exerted strength right when he was about to collapse. Behind him, Aibres yelled, “Where’s it coming from!? Where’s the source!?” One operator had his hand on the communicator, and answered without turning back, “Not sure, but the voice is being broadcasted through various channels.”

“Civilian comms satellites have been hijacked too.”

“It seems the public comms have been hijacked too. Mineva Zabi is on TV…”

“Change the screen! Pinpoint the source ”

“Target spotted!”

The operator’s tone of voice changed, overpowering Aibres’ as it echoed through the room. Ronan and at least thirty others gasped as they stared at the monitor before them. The mist of light gradually dissipated, and there was a shadow beyond the blueish-white veil. There was a strange long and narrow ship, along with a massive revolving residential block tucked in the middle. There was no contrast to when it was last seen. It revealed its undamaged self, still alive, despite the colony laser creating a massive gas.

“Target’s still present! The “Magallanica” is present!”

The operator shrieked. The “Magallanica” showed countless warning lights amidst the dissipating mist, its snail-like appearance resembled a needle hill-like weapons pod on the screen. “It should have taken a direct hit…” Martha muttered as she stood still. Aibres’s hands on the panel did not move, and all breaths in the control room seemed to have vanished. Mineva’s voice was the only thing lingering. Bright then grabbed the headset monitors, and started to say something, but nobody was in the mood to stop him. The guards behind him stared at the screen flabbergasted, and Ronan’s eyes looked towards the “Magallanica” engulfed in the faint veil of light. It appeared to be no mere gaseous being. The rainbow veil flickered, covering the ark of Laplace

“What about the other units? There should be mobile suits and Base Jabber next to the “Magallanica”. Find them!”

Prompted by Bright’s commander-like present, there was a screen filled with flickering light. Ronan stared at the analysis footage that was quickly changing, and subconsciously sought out the Unicorn-Types, only to suddenly sense weakness in his knees. He tumbled over, and

stared at the screen while holding himself up by the pillar. *This is unsightly. Stand up.* His sanity was telling him so, but his body ignored that plea. His hands were clasped together, and he did not hear the bellows roaring above his head.

I don't care what happens now. As long as he's alive, just make sure he lives, then Ronan sensed his vision blurred, tears seeping from the eyes looking towards the floor, and pressed his clasped hands onto his forehead. Aibres and the others sounded increasingly erratic, Mineva's voice became clearer, and the voice announcing the truth echoed in the control room. The voice and the prayer in his heart resonated, becoming tears that washed away the lies in his heart, and slipped down his cheeks.

"End this broadcast right now! Get the "General Revil" over there immediately!"

Martha's shrill voice rang. It was too late however, for it seemed to be devoured by the roars everywhere, and disappeared without reaching anyone's ears.

"I am the heir of the Zabis, who once led the Principality of Zeon. What I wish to say next has nothing to do with my heritage. Today, I have been notified of a secret about the Federation. As a fellow human, I wish to share this secret with everyone."

The smoke stood in the vacuum, and beyond it, there was a light, either a rainbow, or the Northern lights. It seemingly flickered with Mineva's voice, and the bridge window had a dreamlike glow.

It was no illusion however. The light was clearly flickering before the "Nahel Argama", which was charging into the gas. Within the cocoon-like field was the distinct sight of the wrapped "Magallanica". Otto got up from the captain seat, and stared at the ship being shown on the main monitor. The relative distance was approximately 150km. The fine details could not be seen, but looking at its silhouette, it did not appear to have taken much damage. It remained still, despite the surrounding debris atomized into plasma.

"This is unbelievable…the blast from the colony laser actually…"

Aaron uttered dumbfoundedly hile everyone on the bridge was looking intently. They witnessed an energy torrent with a diameter of 200km ravaging everything before their eyes, and anyone would have such a thought. Everyone would wonder if it was an illusion, or even doubt

their survival, but since the ship was still moving, there was something they had to do. The ship slowed greatly, probably because they were wary of the reduced visibility caused by the gas. Upon realizing that, Otto yelled with an anxious voice, “Get the ship close!”

“Anyone available will do. Man the anti-air cameras. Search for the “Unicorn” and “Banshee” at all costs!”

There was no way anything would have happened to them if the “Magallanica” still existed. Surely they were around. Otto repeated to himself as he glared at the “Magallanica” glowing with the mist of light. The long ranged visuals were divided into multiple parts, the complex sensors began to scan. “They didn’t…disappear, right?” Micott asked. “Of course not!” Takuya answered, sounding somewhat miffed, but he immediately looked uneasy as he turned towards Aaron with a sceptical look.

Once their eyes met, Aaron looked down wordlessly. The pilots and the machines at the core of the psycofield might have Otto recalled the words he just heard, and gritted his teeth, “We found something!” he heard the sensor operator, and widened his eyes.

“Looks like the “Banshee”! Above us, R 23 degrees!”

One of the scanned footage was enlarged, and positioned in the center of the main monitor. The lone horned machine drifted aimlessly, and was shown on the enlarged footage, causing tension in the somber mood. “This is the “Nahel Argama”, Romeo 008, Ensign Riddhe! Please respond!” Mihiro started to call out, and Zimmerman yelled, his back turned on her, “Where’s the “Unicorn”!?” . They checked the weapons pod, the docking bay, the radio tower-like bow, and once they got to the revolving residential block, there was a humanoid, “Found him!” the operator’s voice echoed.

“It’s the “Gundam”! The “Unicorn Gundam” is still there!”

The scan grid caught sight of a humanoid shadow, and it was enlarged in phases. The humanoid basked in the veil of light slowly appeared. When the “Gundam” silhouette with the V-shaped horn appeared, there was rapturous cheers, breaking the tense mood.

Takuya and Micott jumped, and embraced in midair. Mihiro too was smiling beneath her helmet “He’s actually alive…!” Zimmerman eked out these words as he smiled, “Get him back, hurry!” Liam ordered, sounded elated. Joyous cheers echoed throughout the bridge, and Otto relaxed as he sank into the captain’s seat. He was still alive. The beast of possibilities named the “Gundam” was drifting in the field of

light it created. “It’s a miracle. This is truly a miracle…!” Aaron yelled as he grabbed Otto, and the latter emptied his mind as he looked up at the monitor.

This commotion might not have reached the “Unicorn Gundam”, for it remained still despite the “Nahel Argama” approaching it. The machine seemed to have expended all its strength as it remained in the light, its flickering silhouette seemingly blending into it. The eerie silence was as though nobody was piloting it, and Otto felt a sense of unease rising.

"When the Universal Century started, there was a Universal Century charter. This stone tablet is the foundation of the Federation, the cornerstone of the policies. I believe everyone knows this well. 96 years ago, this stone tablet was created in the Prime Minister residence of "Laplace", and was lost in a terrorist bombing."

The clear voice ruffled the sea of light, spreading in the waves of space. The waves became a prayer to reduce the century old curse, softening the hardened world, and spreading to every corner of the Earth Celestial Sphere.

Everyone was created by Man, and for Man the Universal Century, the "Laplace Box", and this sea of light were all formed through the same reason. His eyes were purified by the rainbow color, and so too were the filth in his body and mind. Riddhe drifted in the sea of light he was a part of. The light borne from human hearts, the psycofield. It was different from the lights he saw on the battlefield. The light surrounding the "Banshee" was so warm, like being embraced in his mother's clutches, or sleeping in amniotic fluid, reminiscent of the original rest. *Maybe I am waiting to be reborn*, Riddhe thought. Riddhe Marcenas bore too heavy a burden, and could not resonate with the new world...

"This...this is fine, isn't it, dad…?"

Everything ended, and would start again. It was not something he could decide, nor something Banagher nor Mineva could decide. The psycofield of this massive scale could shield the "Magallanica" from the torrent of the colony laser, and it was achieved by the collective consciousness of the entire human race, including him. It was the result of 12 billion desiring for possibilities, gathered on the psycoframe...Riddhe wiped the tears from his eyes, and exhaled hot air, his blurred eyes looked towards the "Magallanica" once again. The massive ship was surrounded by the fading light, the massive

mountain-like silhouette stood behind the "Banshee". Next to the mountain was the mobile suit, the source of the light, still drifting there.

12 billion existences gathered their consciousness upon the beast of possibilities perhaps it was that moment that the "Unicorn Gundam" became the center of the world. *Banagher*, Riddhe wanted to call out, but he hesitated for some reason. *"...Ensign Riddhe! Do you hear me!?"* A voice had him looking forward. The direction of the signal was detected, and the screen automatically expanded, the "Nahel Argama" clearly seen. "Loud and clear. You alright?" Riddhe answered. *"Thank goodness…!"* Mihiro sounded really relieved, but her voice quickly changed to one of sternness.

"Please regroup with the "Nahel Argama". The Federation fleet has begun to move. The assumed objective is to reclaim the "Magallanica" and end the broadcast."

It was to be expected. The Federation government would never allow any uncertainty to threaten the world order. The "General Revil" too was probably off to attack, and the mobile suits on deck might be ready to sortie. *How long can we last by ourselves?*—Mineva's voice seemed to have faded into the background, and Riddhe responded to his own heart. He did not want that voice to be ended, "Understood." He answered, and pulled the joystick. *"Please. An hour will do. Do not allow anyone to approach the "Magallanica"*. Another voice came through the wireless, and a new window was activated.

"I'll try to get my contacts in the Foundation to stop the attack. Hang on until I succeed."

A Base Jabber glided by the dissipating seat of light above. *He's fine too…*Riddhe heaved a small sigh of relief, "Can it work?" he asked. *"Unlike you lot who can only fight, I have my ways."* the dour reply clearly was just like Alberto, who gave this bemusing reply to hide his own sheepishness. Riddhe smiled as he saw the Base Jabber leave.

"The deadlock between Federation and the Foundation has been broken. The directors who only steer the rudder the face of life and death should probably be working extra hard now...aunt's authority is probably over."

Alberto quipped with some lingering bitterness, *"Don't hang up on me."* Riddhe realized the relationship between Alberto and Martha was difficult for any bystander to partake in, and sensed the weight of the matter was not limited only to 'family'. *"Same goes for you."* There was a sense of kindredness in his voice. *"Ensign Riddhe, can you contact*

the "Unicorn"?"

“Banagher isn’t responding. Call out to him. Depending on how Mr Alberto’s negotiations go, we may have to prepare for combat.”

The captain's words of resolve caused his forgotten instincts as a soldier to start again. "Understood. I'll regroup with the "Unicorn"." RIddhe answered, and had the "Banshee" moved towards the "Unicorn Gundam" that was no further than 3km away.

He spotted the machine that remained lifeless for quite a while, and felt anxious again, but he yelled, "Hey Banagher!" The "Unicorn Gundam" did not move. Even though the "Banshee" hand touched its shoulder and started the induction circuit, the main camera did not respond to him. The vague hesitation became icy unease, and Riddhe moved the "Banshee" before the "Unicorn".

"Wake up Banagher! You're still alive. Everyone's waiting for you to go back. Get to the "Nahel Argama"—"

The "Unicorn Gundam" lifted its head and looked back, and all of Riddhe's words vanished. The relieved look on Riddhe's face immediately turned tense. Through the monitor, he could see the eyes give a faint glow. "Hey…" he eked a hoarse voice.

The dual eye cameras meant to imitate humans were the same as the "Banshee"...but, no, these were not machine eyes, and neither were they human. A certain massive existence was staring back. It was not Banagher, but Banagher was a part of it. The "Unicorn Gundam" was a life just borne, observing the human that had become a part of it.

"Banagher, you…"

The chilly easiness was swallowed by the gradually rising sense of loss. He was present, and yet not present—the only words that formed in his heart left Riddhe speechless as he floated in the sea of psycofield. The "Unicorn Gundam" did not continue to look at the backtracking "Banshee". It turned its head around, its face towards the void again. Its expression contained a rational sense beyond human as it kept observing the world around it, as though planning its next move.

"But the stone tablet was not lost. The replica is placed in Dakar Senate hall, and the original was hidden for a long time. Please look closely. Shown behind me is the one created on "Laplace", the true Universal Century Charter."

A hexagonal stone tablet appeared behind the tablet, and the camera zoomed towards it. It was a visual image of the actual item displayed in the cryo, but it was of sufficiently high definition to be expanded. The camera showed every angle of the stone tablet, displaying every single word carved onto the surface.

Everything was controlled by the remote on the podium, along with the headset equipped with the psycommu headset, which showed exactly what the speaker wanted. Mineva imagined 12 billion stares beyond the screen as she faced the camera before her, continuing her speech. There was no need to think. Everything that she saw and felt flowed unhindered as words. Perhaps a priestess chanting a prayer was in this mental state. Mineva knew very well that many involved with the "Box" were standing on this podium, led by Syam and Cardeas, supporting her—

"We shall secure this comms block. Please send 30 capable men from each department. We should be able to get the "Magallanica" running with these many people.

The Dead were not the only ones supporting her. She could hear Conroy contacting the "Nahel Argama" beneath her. Next to her was the deputy Garity, along with the 920 ECOAS members gathered behind them, each wielding light machine guns, dressed in spacesuits specifically designed for space camouflage. They would not fear a massive army invasion, and would probably stand their ground until the very end. Mineva felt that Conroy and the others were acting like her own escorts, and she looked forward at the screen depicting the outside. One could see Earth floating far away, along with the sea of rainbow light. The 'light' gathered the 'lights' in this space, along with the entire world, engulfing the "Magallanica".

"Once the "Nahel Argama" reaches us, we're going to station at the choke points where the enemy will attack. They're technically allies, but don't get careless. There's a future worth protecting. We need to believe that we're doing this for the world. Let's defend with all our might."

Conroy instructed, "Roger!" and the rest of the crew responded, their voices throbbing the sea of light. *I know very well,* Mineva muttered deep within her conscious that it probably was a 'light' lasting a moment, that it would not continue forever, and it would not reach anyone other than those actually involved. Did people not look forward to such a 'light' since ancient times? Even if they were not embodied by the psycoframe, the 'light' that formed from time to time could pull

humanity from the brink of destruction, the abyss, and rewrote history. It was meaningless when blinking on its own, this temporal 'light'— would connect into the distant future, connecting and resonating far beyond the time. Mineva once again realized this was a moment that would become eternity, and she was part of it. However, she felt a gale of sadness, for the most important fragment was missing.

She turned her consciousness to a corner of the screen, the two mobile suits floating in the sea of light. It seemed Riddhe too had noticed, for the "Banshee" looked obviously perturbed when facing the "Unicorn Gundam". The machine was fine, the flesh remained, but the Banagher Links they knew of was no longer there. When the light of the colony laser engulfed him, Mineva sensed his life was taken by the 'light', the warmth from that warm hand taken away from his palm.

He did not die. Like many of the linger consciousness, they remained in the "Unicorn Gundam". However, they could not reach him. Banagher was in a place nobody could reach. The beast of possibilities was groomed by belief, and did not need a physical presence to exist. Perhaps he was an ethereal existence that did not need flesh. The understanding was so painful and bitter to Mineva, who wept quietly.

Tears flowed from her eyes without affecting her fluent speech, and the spotlight looked dim. Luckily for her, there was no gravity, and the tears floated, such that they could not be shown on camera when they dissipated. Mineva told herself that she could not tremble, and her teary eyes stared at the camera. *"Ensign Riddhe? What's the matter? Get the "Unicorn" back to the ship, quickly."* The voice rang away through the wireless.

"We noticed mobile suit squadrons coming from the "General Revil". There's lots of them."

"Banagher, get back to the shop now."

"It's too tough for you to lead the way, Banagher!"

"Everyone's waiting for you, Banagher."

Otto, Liam, Zimmerman and Micott called for him. Mineva resisted the urge to yell as she kept the "Unicorn Gundam" within a corner of her eyes. They were waiting with their arms spread wide, anxiously awaiting the return of their beloved beast. *I will not allow you to say that you have no need to exist. You promised me that you will return no matter what. Come back, Banagher. We felt each other's warmth through that body of flesh.*

There was no response. The "Unicorn Gundam", which remained as it was, silently lifted its head in the abyss of the psycofield where light barely shone through. The stone tablet showed her reflection and glowed like a silver mirror, and Mineva continued to weep silently.

"I suppose everyone knows now that the real Universal Century Charter has an additional chapter we did not know of. In future, if the existence of new space-adapting humans is confirmed, their inclusion in the running of the government is to be prioritized...this was added under the 'future' chapter."

Minerva continued her speech with the hexagonal stone tablet shining in the background. She did not remove her spacesuit, either because she had no time, or that she was concerned that the Zeon uniform she was wearing would leave too much of a first impression. Either way, she had her back turned on the stone tablet that was the Universal Century charter, and her presence as she 'spoke to the people' was one that never happened a century ago. Her words and tone contained a will no half-baked politician would match. It was as though the soul of Ricardo Marcenas resided in her.

The footage shown on the screen in the control room was not through a military comms, but through every civilian channel satellite. Every person could see and hear her. It was standard time, 1.30pm, and the world was still engaged, except for half of Earth still at night. For a century, they worked so hard to hide this secret, and yet there was a noontime soap opera broadcasted everywhere. There really was no better stage to unveil the "Box" to the entire world, and Ronan smiled wryly.

He did not stop thinking because of despair, nor was he sneering at himself after giving up. He had never felt so heartened for decades. All the units stationed near the "Magallanica", including the Unicorn-type Riddhe was in, were confirmed to be safe. It was known that the "Nahel Argama" too was around, so he probably was not too carried away to laugh. Knowing it was the last chance for him to laugh, Ronan did so, huffing his shoulders as he laughed away. "This...actually…" Martha groaned, stumbling backwards as she bumped into the railing. She stabilized herself from falling over completely, "...There is a way out of this. It will be easy to deal with this. How many people in this world know the significance of this broadcast? As long as the media does not pay attention to this, nobody will care about the contents of the Universal Century charter. Even if it is an artiste causing such a

serious controversy, it will be forgotten in a matter of three minutes."

Her eyes were widened due to fear, and her lips were the only parts smiling. Nobody answered her; not Bright, not Aibres. Everyone stared at Mineva who informed them of the "Box" truth. Nobody turned to look at Martha, who clenched her fist behind her back, giving Ronan a numb smile.

"Isn't that right, Senator Ronan? Nothing will change. As long as the Foundation works together with the council, this little fire will be put out. We can simply jam the signal and not mention what happened. There is a limit to how much commotion the activists can cause. Once the government comes out and say it is all rubbish, no amount of evidence will deny—"

"But no matter how we manipulate the media, the fact remains that the original stone tablet is over there."

Ronan had enough of her tirade, and pointed his chin at the screen. "Destroy it then!" Martha lashed out, the smile vanished from her face as she glared at Aibres.

"Commander, fire the colony laser once again. That light was an illusion. All the obstacles have vanished, so you should be able to hit it at 100% output."

"That's impossible. Most of the capacitors and circuits were fired from the last attack. It'll take weeks of repairs to fire once again…"

"Order the "General Revil" to attack! While we're wasting time here, that "Magallanica" is intruding on Federation authority!"

Martha looked as though she was about to lynch Aibres, and the latter looked around, perturbed. He had no backing from the Foundation and the Settlement Issues council. Bright ignored the fact that that Aibres appeared to be adrift as he calmly approached Martha, "The illegal transmission is still ongoing, and obviously, the military shall act accordingly." he spoke tersely.

“But this has nothing to do with you as a civilian.”

Martha was overwhelmed by his presence, her body frozen as she had nowhere to retreat. Bright continued to stare intently as he took another step forward.

“As commander of the special forces Londo Bell, I have many questions to ask. Martha Vist Carbine, please come with us.”

His words were as sharp as an officer questioning a suspect, echoing

throughout the control room. Martha's shoulders shivered, her pale face barely eking a sneer, "What…are you saying?" she muttered.

"You are still waiting to be redeployed, no? You have no such authority. Nobody has the authority to investigate me. Commander Aibres, arrest this man. His entrance here is a breach of military regulations, no?"

Martha glared at Aibres from beyond the shoulder of Bright, who stood still like a wall. Of course, Aibres never looked back at her. Martha grew increasingly pale, and her eyes were increasingly mad. "What's wrong with you!? Answer me! I'm the acting leader of the Vist Foundation, Even the High Council—" Her outrage sounded like a shriek, "Miss Martha." Ronan interrupted.

"The magic of the 'Box' is gone. Stop."

Martha wanted to refute, but was unable to say anything as her lips merely quivered . Next to her, Bright gave a tense, wary look towards Ronan, "Don't worry. Things will develop as you say." Ronan continued, and looked towards the screen, not at them.

"There is no proof that those humans who adapted to space life…are the Newtypes we speak of, and nobody will actually prove it. The public has a short term memory. In another four to five years, nobody will care about the "Laplace Box"."

"Then…!"

"Similarly, even if my position is swapped with yours, nobody will mind."

Ronan continued to look at the flickering belt of light, his back turned on a speechless Martha. It was turning faint, but the Northern Lights-like veil continued to wrap around the "Magallanica". The strange light continued to flicker in their eyes. It showed the wills of the people there or perhaps it was the will of the entire world, including hime.

"Everything, including this, is their choice. Leave my son, and your nephew…to them."

They had reached the point of divergence that was the century, and were the prototypes of Newtypes, changing the world gradually while bearing the next era...even if they never thought about it. It was common in history for things to return to the status quo. If the pleas were overly drastic, the drawback too would be beyond expectations. The world would not simply change based on a person's will alone. Ronan once believed that he would not become like that, but

unwittingly, he arrived at the same alley as those before him. He was lost, groaned and cried, for it was to be expected. Any human would have experienced this day.

Thus, there was a need for possibilities. There needed to be a few lights paving the way in the road of darkness. There was no need to keep shining, a single moment of strong light would be sufficient. When the light fades and is forgotten, surely someone would shine a new light. It was not them to do it, but the people after them, the children who had yet to show up.

Thus, there was no need to fear, and no need to worry. All they needed to do at this point was to give their blessings to this new light. They would entrust the light of possibility, which they never were able to convey over the century, into the next century. Ronan basked himself in the distant light, the lead hammer in his heart seemingly melting away. “If the child surpasses the father…” Ronan heard this mutter, and turned to glance aside to spot Martha, who seemed to have aged a decade, and yet smiled with relief, with no obvious sarcasm.

“Ultimately, you do believe in a foolish man’s romance…how unsightly.”

It sounded as though she was implying, "I do not dislike this." Was he overthinking it? Before Ronan could think further about it, she shot Bright a dignified look of a female leader, and went towards the entrance. *I do not need the magic of the "Box", I shall continue to fight, even if I have to do it alone*—there was an escalating intent in her footsteps, and Bright followed suit as he led the guards. Before they left, Bright, being a father like Ronan, exchanged looks with the latter, who felt the hammer in his heart melt further.

Ronan still had work to do. The impatient sons had yet to learn how to deal with the aftermath. The priority at this point was to work together with the willing parties in the Foundation, and then to stop the military from attacking. Ronan worked his numb mind while his eyes remained fixated on the screen. For the time being, he stared at the rainbow light with an empty heart. Riddhe’s mobile suit remained a mere speck, seemingly immersed in the sea of light, which worried Ronan greatly.

"Of course, this does not refer to Newtypes. The Newtype theory advocated by Zeon Deikum is that humans who entered space will enhance their senses and interact with others without misunderstanding, and that happened more than 40 years after this chapter was finished. The chapter buried in the "Laplace" Incident was

probably just a prayer for the future."

Mineva's voice rang through the bodies and souls, and the sirens arose from the feet. Nigel was no longer looking at the light surrounding the "Magallanica", but at the utterly damaged deck, the deck of the "Nahel Argama" the "Jesta" had landed on. *"All hands, prepare for battle stations!"* Captain Otto's words could be heard, and he sensed the ship itself shaking slightly.

'Looking at the optical sensors, it seems the "General Revil" has deployed 48 units, and they*ll be within firing range in 10 minutes. All hands on deck, prepare for intercepting fire. Do not fire until a direct order has been issued."*

48 units would be the equivalent of 4 battalions on the "General Revil". It was a brazen all out attack, but it was an appropriate number of enemies, considering that the enemy had just parried aside the colony laser. "They cleared out the hangar!" Nigel noted, *"Now what?"* Daryl answered with a grimace.

"No matter how far the negotiations go, it'll take about 10 minutes to relay the commands."

"If it's Watts, what will he say?"

Daryl answered as his unit loaded the few cartridges into the beam rifle, ready to sortie as he awaited the command. Nigel hoped to receive some supplies, but even then, he did not want to fight against friendlies. "Isn't it obvious?" Nigel answered as he stepped on the pedal. The two "Jestas" blared their thrusters, leaped off the deck of the "Nahel Argama", and flew into the psycofield sea.

Even if they could not fight openly, they could charge into the opposing ranks and disrupt them. It would be best if the negotiations were successful, but if they were not…that would be for a later time. Nigel was probed by the 'light' of optimism, and let his unit fly towards the "General Revil *attack. The Minovsky particles were already scattered, but Mineva's voice remained uninterrupted. The broadcast continued, echoing throughout the space that was the Earth Celestial Sphere.*

"But it was this moment of coincidence that turned the charter into a curse. What would happen if this chapter was tied together with Zeon's Newtype theory, and sparked the spacenoid's independence movement? The stone tablet that was supposed to be the truth behind the "Laplace Incident" became a terrifying object that could topple the

Federation government. The government feared its existence, and colluded with the Vist Foundation, which had obtained this tablet, and sealed it away by calling it the "Laplace Box"."

The two new units on the open air deck could be seen blaring thrusters on the external cameras. Memory had it that they were the Tri Stars "Jestas". Since they were in combat formation, it seemed they were not retreating to their own ship. *Are they about to fight back too?* Zimmerman muttered , and looked away from the screen on the panel, turning towards the canopy before him.

Zimmerman looked at the little boat at the stern of the "Nahel Argama", which doubled as a landing deck. He linked the suit's backpack to the seat's attachment. It appeared to be an old model used since the One Year War, but for an emergency escape boat, the visibility was decent. Zimmerman assumed that Flaste, on the pilot seat next to him, would feel the same, but the latter looked at the panel monitor, and never lifted his displeased face. Did he feel strangely out of place due to the rapid change of events? "What's wrong?" Zimmerman tried to act callous as he asked. "They call themselves the Tri-Stars, so why are there only two units?" Zimmerman felt weak upon hearing the reply.

"If they're going to imitate the Zeon Tri-Stars, there should be three units."

Zimmerman felt stupid for being relieved because of this. "Who knows?" The pre-launch instructions were over, and the maintenance crew outside left the canopy, drawing circles with glowsticks to indicate all clear. Zimmerman looked towards the landing deck once again, and the sight of the Federation ship they stayed on for too long was etched in his eyes. Otto's face was shown on the comms monitor *"Good luck captain". The elevator gate slowly rumbled open.*

"Negotiations will take some time, and currently, we can't avoid battle. Please use to the "Magallanica" defences to buy us some time."

"Got it. I never expect to be the captain of that large ship though."

Flaste held onto the joystick as he gave a grimace. The Garancieres crew was packed into the passenger seats, giving the same looks. Otto was requested to send capable men to the "Magallanica", so he chose them. The decisiveness in the decision would leave them wondering if he just wanted to shoo out the troublemakers, but it appeared not to be the case. The survival of the "Nahel Argama", already depleted of ammunition, would depend on the "Magallanica" operations. *"We really never lived however we liked."* Otto chuckled

without hinting at anything else, and Zimmerman shrugged.

'But I'm proud to fight alongside you at this critical moment. Let's have a drink once it's over."

It was an old line of courtesy, but it resonated with their hearts. For men at their age, there was nothing that could touch their hearts as thoroughly. Middle-aged men really were doofus, no matter whether they were Federation or Zeon. "Understood. I'll leave the choice of shop to you." Zimmerman lowered the helmet visor, and straightened his back. Otto saluted back, and vanished from the monitor, replaced by Mihiro. *"Please launch, and good luck*." Taking the words as motivation, the boat began to move forward, passing through the elevator gate.

They flew 180 degrees from the stern, and headed towards the "Magallanica". As they passed through the areas the "Nahel Argama", their eyes saw the rainbow lights that were starting to fade, but flickered across at least 50km of space. The "Nahel Argama" too was wrapped in the rainbow arm. Then, two units appeared, their backs facing the "Magallanica". Zimmerman enlarged the visual, and the blocks of noise were corrected. Two humanoid shapes were carved out; they were the Unicorn-types.

The "Unicorn Gundam" should have been ordered to return, but it remained still. The "Banshee" remained before the sister unit, and appeared to be at a loss of what to do. A sense of uneasiness suddenly arose, but it vanished before he realized the reason. "What's with him…?" Flaste muttered, and Zimmerman stared at the monitor, "He's probably sleeping." He answered/

"He protected the "Magallanica" with that small body of his. Let him sleep for now. It's time for us to move out."

Zimmerman shushed the uneasiness within him, and looked forward. The "Magallanica" filled the line of sight in this round canopy, and its weapon pods remained in this glowing light. It was the field created by the resonance of the psycoframes…Marida showed them the 'light'. *Is her soul inside too?"* Zimmerna quietly thought to himself as he stared at the flickering light, and narrowed his eyes at the "Magallanica", determined not to let the light dissipate.

Even if it was a 'light' destined to vanish, never to be passed to everyone, surely he would protect it until the princess' speech ended. The "Magallanica" existed for this, and so did he. Zimmerman experienced this thought again, and took into the bustling light of life.

Fee, Marie, Marida, if you remember me, please look at me. Papa will do something that'll make you proud— Zimmerman muttered in his throbbing heart as he inspected the weapons pods protruding from the “Magallanica”. The flickering 'light' never obstructed their view, and even shone into the shadows equally, as though assisting him.

"Perhaps it was done out of malice, but it was done in order to maintain peace and stability. However, the result of it was the continuation of the status quo, and the meaning of the "Box" will be lost. The fear of the Newtypes remained ingrained, and after the nightmare that was the One Year War, this mentality shaped the Federation government's resolute will."

The voice from afar could not fill the emptiness in the heart, and it passed through the body, fading away. Did the voice come from the crack before him? Angelo looked at the all-view monitor that was as cracked as the armor, his emptied mind started to flicker, and there was something beyond it that glowed, causing him to turn his head for the first time in hours.

The object reflecting the moonlight showed a glow more solid than the starlight. It was a star fragment—a comet. A current jolted through his empty mind, and Angelo climbed out from the belly of the "Rozen Zulu". He had no idea where he was, or what he was doing, but he remembered to open the cockpit. Once he left, he stared at the object that was only the size of his fist.

He had a closer look, and realized it was the debris of the machine. The nearly spherical object had chipped armor and cables embedded by the side. Its surface was shone upon by the moon once again, and Angel saw the red appearing in the darkness. He no longer thought about what it was. The fragment of the Red Comet—the name engraved on the chest. Angelo floated towards the vacuum.

He reached his arm out, his fingers touching the thing that resembled a heart. The sphere was cracked all over, and a little deformed. There was a hatch large enough for a person to pass through. Angelo moved his arms according to memory, and pulled down the handle. The rectangular hatch slid aside, and the weak lights of the stars shone in, shining upon the person seated on the chair.

He appeared to be in slumber. The red pilot suit remained still in the linear seat, the head covered in the helmet remained lowered. The surrounding machinery was completely wrecked. Angelo entered the cramped ball, the frosty vacuum surrounded him as he touched that

person's shoulders. The seat buckles appeared to be loose. The red pilot suit slowly floated, and the helmet ornamented with a horn fell towards Angelo.

Angelo bore the weight as pain arose in his heart. Tears started to well for some reason, blurring his vision. *You came here because you have nowhere to go?* He embraced the frozen fragment of the Red Comet, and brought the lifeless body into his clutches. The tears formed blobs, sparkling lights floated in the helmet.

"Captain...you tired yourself out once again…"

The sudden words were devoured by emptiness, and vanished. Angelo embraced that person, and exerted strength into his hands, wanting to convey his warmth. Until the very end however, he never noticed that the visor was turned into powder.

They clung close to each other in the heart of the "Sinanju" devoid of its body, and slowly froze together in vacuum. The lights of the "General Revil" mobile suit squads passed y above, but it had nothing to do with Angelo at all.

"In a few years, the nation known as Zeon shall disappear, and the myth of the Newtypes shall be buried in the darkness of history, but it does not matter. I do not intend to pursue the matter with the Federation in spite of this revelation, and nor do I want the resurgence of Zeon. If anyone intends to do so, I shall declare, as Mineva Zabi, that I will correct that thinking. The "Laplace Box" is not such a thing. It is a box that contains humanity's kindness. A hundred years ago, we spacenoids were sent to space out of goodness. It might be out of deceit of our consciousnesses, an irresponsible prayer, but please think in the position of those who did so. They chose the best method out of the many options, and entrusted their wishes to the next generations.. While our issues differ in magnitude, we do encounter the same struggles as them. Shall we keep the "Box"? Shall we seal it? Shall we open it completely? Everything was done for humanity. It is our sin as humans, our just rewards, but it can become a possibility of destruction, or hope."

Dozens, hundreds of missiles were fired from the weapons pods, dragging long trails in psycofield, and they flew through the diluted rainbow, expanding as fireballs dozens of kilometers away, expanding in space along with the strange rainbow lights.

The extremely dense unique gas curbed the spread of Minovsky

Particles, and weakened the beams by resonating with the mega particles. The missiles were equipped with what they called the M-heads, and diffused the beams, which prevented a long ranged bombardment in some defensive manner. It seemed the crew that boarded the "Magallanica" got to work immediately. While the lights scattered like fireworks, Riddhe continued to look at the "Unicorn Gundam", which was by his side the entire time. The white giant remained still as it looked forward at the distant explosions. The psycoframe had absorbed its pilot's thoughts, and was glowing rainbow, staring at the space battlefield with innocent eyes.

"What are you doing Riddhe!? Management has pulled its weight, but it'll take 30 minutes until the attack stops. It's a battlefield there!"

Alberto lashed out, and the Base Jabber passed by the feet. Riddhe stared wordlessly at the machine that seemingly flew together with the missiles.

"I'll continue to negotiate with the “Magallanica”. You two should evacuate."

"Right. Even without the power of the "Unicorn Gundam", we can survive on our own strength!"

"The "Unicorn" and the "Banshee" should probably be exhausted. Banagher, please return to the ship quickly."

"You hear us? Banagher?"

"Didn't we all agree to return to "Industrial 7" together!?"

Male and female, old and young, the voices came from both the “Magallanica” and the”Nahel Argama”. Comfort and trust, such was the pressure borne from their reliance on him—*you bonded with so many people without knowing. You took on their hopes and trust, and you wore out your body and mind piloting this unit?* The understanding loomed upon him in the form of regret, and Riddhe clenched his fists. He turned towards the silent "Unicorn Gundam", wiped away the droplets in his eyes. "Everyone, I'm sorry." He tried to act cheery.

"Comms offline, so you can't hear him. Banagher's fine. He said he'll be headed back."

Before Riddhe could felt guilty about this lie, *"Don't make us worry…!"* Alberto responded. *"Hurry up. There'll be bombardment next."* Otto's voice followed in the noise. The Minovsky particles were starting to increase in intensity, it seemed, and the comms were cut off after another few words. Silent, flashing explosions appeared before

the two units, but it appeared to be something completely unrelated to the "Unicorn Gundam". Riddhe looked at the sidelong face that never seemed to have heard anything, and was disappointed as he touched the white armor using the "Banshee" hand.

"Come on, let's go back, Banagher."

Riddhe called out through the induction channel. He knew he was useless, but he listened attentively. He could not hear breathing, just the silence of the cockpit through the armor. A chill entered the cockpit of the "Banshee".

"Your mission's over. "Laplace Box" is opened. Go back to the ship to rest. You...you're born into this world."

The white giant contained the psycoframe the metal that absorbed human consciousness as its blood, and it shivered. *I know you no longer exist as a human in there. The price of you activating the psycofield is that your soul is absorbed by the "Unicorn Gundam".* Inside here was a new, unknown lifeform, borne from the absorption of human life. Perhaps it could no longer be called a machine, but a new amalgam called the "Unicorn Gundam"...

The existence called Banagher became ambiguous, for he was fused with many thoughts, and the consciousness formed lingered in the machine. What was it doing in this rainbow amniotic fluid, having arrived at the final destination of human possibilities? Riddhe could not feel any will from the shoulder that was touched, only a devastating sense of loss. "Everyone's waiting for you." He seemingly groaned.

"You don't have any weapons left. Get on board. Maybe you'll calm down. Maybe you'll return to how you were…"

Half the words were meant to convince himself. Riddhe grabbed the floating machine, and watched to drag it back, but the arm of the "Unicorn Gundam" easily waved it the "Banshee" hand aside.

—I do not need weapons.

The eyes gave a faint light as they stared back, and Banagher's 'voice' rang. "Banagher…" Riddhe muttered as he stared blankly at the giant with the V-shaped horn.

—You can fly too. Here…

The calm 'voice' rang in the vacuum, and the "Unicorn Gundam" leaped through it. There was no thruster blare, and the rainbow light emitted from its body propelled it towards the battlefield. A rainbow phosphorus light followed through. The psycoframe of the "Banshee"

too glowed more than ever as it pursued its sister unit.

It felt like he was dragged along by an invisible hand. A rainbow light was seeping in the cockpit, reached the consciousness of the "Unicorn Gundam", and throbbed away. Riddhe stared blankly at the light, and put his hand on his heart that was throbbing along with the wave. The moment he witnessed it, he felt a wave from the "Unicorn Gundam"...and felt goosebumps. The wave shook time and space, and was seemingly turning time back. If it was a fusion of 'collective' thoughts taking the form of a giant one, it would be an existence no human intelligence could grasp. The overlap of minds was not simply a case of one plus one, it was called the unlimited power of wills, capable of causing this 'light'. For individual humans, it was akin to a primordial single cell organism staring at the ultimate evolution—like a complete human.

"The "Unicorn Gundam"...the ultimate consciousness humanity knows of…"

It would not be hindered by the flesh. The collective wills were moving freely in space. The many thoughts were forever intertwined in a massive pool of knowledge. The people who lived in that instance had no words to communicate with. Was this the true form of a Newtype? To normalize a resonance? It was as though they had turned him into a god—

"...You got to be kidding. I'm not accepting this. No way will I accept this being the final destination of human evolution."

Is this the reaction of the Oldtypes? To hell with whatever they say. Riddhe was driven by the rage in his heart as he glared at the giant that moved before him.

We never had many opportunities to talk, but we trusted each other from time to time, and fought from time to time. We've been bound by the same string of fate. Riddhe's current self was born due to the human called Banagher Links, and the irreplaceable fragment was right in front of Riddhe, yet unable to be grasped. Many awaited his return, but he raced through space, as though having abandoned the world, and was about to move beyond it. *How can I accept this? Zeon Deikum said that Newtypes are creatures who have exceptional insight and kindness. An arrogant being who abandoned them could not possibly be a real Newtype.*

"You rude idiot. You don't think of the consequences, and you're already so far ahead. Just look around you! Nobody wants this kind of outcome. The possibility alone is enough!"

The "Unicorn Gundam" had no intention of looking back as it went forth. The mega particles in its path exploded, causing sparks on the veil of gas. The trails of long ranged missiles appeared as countless black dots. Riddhe immediately evaded, but the "Unicorn Gundam" continued to move forward. Its manipulators had no weapons when it stretched its arms out, and opened its palm towards the incoming missiles. It was assumed that the palms contained psycommu jacks, but they were radiating a visible rainbow light, and a new rainbow belt was released into the psycofield sea.

The waves of light waves touched the missiles, and reduced them to fireballs. The "Unicorn Gundam" paid no heed to the countless explosions expanding around it as it charged through the light. Riddhe pulled the joystick and gave chase after it, exerting all his 'strength' into the "Banshee". *Don't look down on me, I don't want to be a servant to a god. We'll protect our possibilities in our own ways.* Riddhe turned his heartfelt emotions into words, and yelled, "Banshee!"

The psycoframe excluded a golden light that pulled aside the resonating rainbow light. The horn on its head opened in a V-shape, and its limbs expanded as it blared with lights. Riddhe spotted the white giant among the maddening heat source and lights, and stepped on the pedal. The "Banshee", in the form of the "Gundam", blared its main thrusters as it charged forth once again.

“Let’s go catch that idiot,”Banshee”!”

Riddhe stared intently at the "Unicorn Gundam" within the sensor range, and went full throttle. The lion "Gundam" roared, and the accelerated G force pressed down upon the black unit.

"I'm not going to let you...get beyond the rainbow. I'll drag you back, for yourself. You and I have lots of things to do in this world!"

There was a ripple of light in this psycofield, and the exploding missiles erupted into flashes and shockwaves. The cockpit shook greatly as it took the impacts head on, but Riddhe kept staring at the "Unicorn Gundam" intently. *I'm not letting you go. I'll chase you to the ends of the world.* As Mineva's voice rang, the "Banshee" repositioned itself as it blared its thrusters, giving chase to the white giant that was about to disappear.

“How are you going to hug a girl like this! Huh!? I’ll steal Audrey away, Banagher!”

The "Unicorn Gundam" crossed the sea of light, through the gas clouds jamming the beams as its phosphorus lights were dragged

through the darkness of space. Riddhe caught sight of it within his blurred vision, and had the "Banshee" give chase after the departing Unicorn. The black lion rushed through the void, engraving golden trails. Two beams glided through the gaps between the stairs, creating a comet trail.

"Humans want to improve, to eradicate all unreasonable thoughts, to improve this world little by little. When the Earth was unable to support the developed civilizations, our ancestors delivered the many humans into space. Truly they would be bemoaned for abandoning their people, but ultimately, it was for the sake of kindness, for humanity and Earth to survive. In future, if the existence of new space-adapting humans is confirmed, their inclusion in the running of the government is to be prioritized. That was the chapter added on the last night of Anno Domini, at the end of the Universal Century charter, and surely it was borne out of endless kindness. It all started from kindness, and whether this will end with kindness will depend on our feelings. When we change, the world will change. Even if we may not become Newtypes, we have the soul to feel, to adapt to the environment, and the power to change. Nothing will change as long as the hazard of denying ourselves as humans remains, and that we continue to seek the outrageous that is a Newtype, It may be inconvenient, and we may be anxious, but we can only continue with the kindness woven through our blood, and what we have is already in our bodies."

When it woke up, **it** was perturbed by the many erratic thoughts surrounding it, and felt dizzy as it stood for a long time.

Delight, anger, sadness. **It** was unable to abandon hope or despair, and the countless thoughts continue to reverberate around him. They never noticed how loud their voices were when they called for each other. It too was once part of them...but its memory was hazy. **It** continued to observe the noisy thoughts. There seemed to be a cluster of pressure threatening its existence, and **it** prompted the machine host forward, the priority being to eliminate that presence.

Large droves of missiles and mobile suits were closing in, but in fact, none could threaten its existence. **It** relied on the weak energy caused by inertia, along with the collective thoughts stored within **it**—unlimited 'power' was produced, yet its silhouette looked so feeble. **It** waved the hand, deployed a field, and destroyed the bee-like missiles.
Then, **it** turned forward towards the floating blue planet, and the surrounding colonies, before listening to the noisy billions of thoughts.

This is a lie, so someone said. *No, it's not beneath the Federation to do this,* someone else refuted. *The world's going to be turned upside down now,* a group of people discussed. Some declared there was no proof that Newtypes existed, and nothing would change.

Most of the thoughts however never participated in this debate. While this unexpected incident caught their attention, they would soon return to the work at hand. Their thoughts were preoccupied with today's dinner and tomorrow's schedule. **It** felt that such dimwittedness was something only creatures of flesh would have, and an inconvenience to put in hours to maintain them.

Despite that, there was a certain change in their souls. Of the billions of thoughts, many chose to remain silent, but they were strongly reacting, like a resonating light forming deep within their hands. Surely, these lights would grow within everyone, resonate, and be groomed for the future. **It** felt disjointed from them, for it could not join them in their future.

'*It* ***found itself unexpectedly stunned.*** **The collective thoughts have formed me, yet** I **feel so 'disjointed. Do I wish to return to that vessel of flesh?** Such thoughts and awareness was something the flesh, the little universe called the brain, could not contain. Once **it** returned, **it** would forget everything, and be dominated by the limited senses of the flesh. The life climbing out from the abyss of the planet could finally be free with space. Why was there a need to backtrack?

It hesitated a moment, wondering if it was anything to do with the lingering senses in the flesh. The various thoughts within it unleashed 'heat' however, causing it to tremor as though there was flesh.

The trembling thoughts took their own appearances, and physical voices like Cardeas and Marida rang. **It** felt suffocated, cramped, unable to swim with them. It could not change anything, yet it hoped to change, to connect with the voices of the many bodies of flesh that formed the soul, in this 'disjointed' reality'—*keep saying, even so. It is not about what we should do, but what we think we should.* The maddening, almost disintegrating tremors kept occurring inside '**it**. At the same time, **it** heard many voices coming from the outside world, and it turned behind for the first time since **it** was born.

Riddhe piloted the black lion, and the "Banshee" gave chase. Audrey was standing on the podium, facing the world, calling for him. At a corner of the "Magallanica", Alberto was anxiously dealing with the aftermath. Zimmerman was yelling commands in the control room, flustered that he had yet to master the controls. Takuya and Micott

were on the "Nahel Argama" bridge that was clearly lacking manpower, slowly helping out. Haro was bouncing around, hit Liam in the head, and landed in the hands of Otto, who was yelling away…

The binding flesh would never reach the truth due to numbness and weakness yet it felt so warm. The 'warmth' that continued to tussle together started because of them. Some warmth could only be generated through that flesh, and some could only be forged by them. **Its** consciousness turned forward again, at the world that could be considered free, and stopped moving forth. The humans who knew only of human senses would never allow them, the godly existences, to exist. The body it resided in the "Unicorn Gundam" would be sealed together with the "Laplace Box", along with the flesh and body. The psycoframe would be buried as a taboo technology, and there might not be a second chance, but that was to be expected. Even if the technology was to be buried, the human knowledge used to create it would not be sealed. The flesh remained chaotic and inefficient, yet it would give rise to unexpected results. It was not impossible to say they would evolve in another way.

They could endure that bit of constraint, as long as these wavering convictions could be borne into possibilities. **It** entrusted itself in that body of flesh, which was the start of everything they felt, grasped, and chose. Cardeas, Marida and the others hoped so, and would not spend too much time into it. Banagher Links' body of flesh would rot, and would not last a century. Finally, **it** looked towards the transparent blue vagina floating before it, the planet that was the source of it all, and threw itself into it

The rainbow dividing the worlds apart engulfed the senses. *I shall bless you*, **It** heard someone calling for it. The still innocent children were being born on this motherly planet. The gods within them—the possibilities arising from knowledge. For it was because it felt so unnatural, that it complemented the natural. It was possible to find the raison d'etre, to use the 'light' of truth upon this world. **It**. The mother-like nature would form a contrast with the 'father', the guardian, and even when bound by the flesh...no, only those who knew of the warmth of flesh could reach this state.

There was no need to panic. There was still lots of time. It would take another millennium or two for the colonies to move beyond the galaxy.

"In the past, Ricardo Marcenas once said. There is no need to worry about the script others write. Just look at the future that is about to begin with the god of possibilities in your heart. Almost a century has

passed, and we are back at the start. What I say is what I think. To all hearing this broadcast, please see the truth with your own eyes. Like the people a century ago, please think for the next century with kindness. Believe in the god called possibilities sleeping in our heart —"'

A current flowed through the frozen body, and the fingertips drifting in zero gravity twitched. The floating palm grabbed the joystick before it was completely awake, and regained control of the machine.

"Audrey…"

Banagher felt his flesh, and muttered. Riddhe's yells could be heard through the wireless, but he could not hear what it was about. The enemy had retreated, and the negotiations succeeded. Zimmerman and Otto and the others were calling for each other, yet they seemed so unfamiliar to his blurred consciousness. While in a daze, Banagher pulled the joystick, and had the "Unicorn Gundam" head towards where it should return to.

He returned to the "Magallanica", the large revolving residential block akin to a silver mirror. The beast of possibilities continued to race between the moon and Earth, to frolic with the girl inside it.

End.